PRATAPADITYA PAL

THE ARTS OF NEPAL

PART II

PAINTING

HANDBUCH DER ORIENTALISTIK

Herausgegeben von B. Spuler
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LEIDEN/KÖLN
E. J. BRILL
1978

Ravi Shakya
Ikhachhen, Lalitpur
Nepal

THE ARTS OF NEPAL

BY

PRATAPADITYA PAL

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With 220 plates

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"How does the mind produce its divers effects?" "By the process of depicting. There is no kind of decorative art in the world more various-and-pictorial than painting. . . . A mental concept arises in the (mind of the) painters . . . that 'such and such forms should be made in such and such ways.' In accordance with this mental concept by drawing, priming, colouring, adding highlights, and shading, etc., duly performed, the finished painting arises . . ."

From the *Atthasālinī*, as translated by A. K. Coomaraswamy, "An early passage on Indian painting", *Eastern Art*, III (1931),p. 218.

To my mother
Srimati Bidyut Kana Pal
whose ceaseless devotion to her gods
has been the sustaining force in her family's welfare

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PREFACE

Volume one of the *Arts of Nepal*, concerned exclusively with sculpture, appeared over three years ago, and, although I had intended to publish this second volume somewhat sooner, I was diverted by other commitments, such as the Asia House catalogue, *Nepal/Where the Gods are Young*. However, in searching for material for that exhibition, I uncovered several unknown paintings which necessitated postponing the writing of this volume until the beginning of 1975. The cornucopia of Nepali art seems inexhaustible and since the Asia House exhibition, many other examples of Nepali painting have surfaced which unfortunately could not be included in this book. Undoubtedly in the next decade or so, many other important Nepali paintings will emerge and a new history will have to be written. Hopefully, this book will serve the same purpose as the first volume in providing those interested in the subject with a preliminary survey of the history of Nepali painting.

Like the volume on sculpture, this book is a much expanded version of my doctoral dissertation at the University of Cambridge where I spent three delightful and profitable years between 1962-1965. I should once again like to express my deep sense of gratitude to Dr. F. R. Allchin, who could be justly characterized as "the ideal supervisor". I am also indebted to Professor Dr. J. E. van Lohuizen-deLeeuw, who was one of my examiners at Cambridge and who has continued to take a keen interest in my work. As editor of this series, she has been of great help in improving the text. I would also like to offer my thanks once more to many personal friends in Nepal who have always been kind and hospitable and to several professional colleagues without whose help this book could not have been written. In particular, I should mention Dr. Mary Slusser for her advice and suggestions and Mr. John Lowry who kindly made available the photographs that forced me to add the brief appendix. But most of all, I wish to record my appreciation to Mr. Gautamvajra Vajracharyya, who has been of great assistance in helping me to interpret the Newari inscriptions on the paintings. Indeed, without his generous help my own perception and understanding of the subject would have remained inadequate.

Many others have helped with information or photographs, Mr. Deepak Shimkhada for some of the pictures of the murals, and Mr. Madanjit Singh and the New York Graphic Society for permission to reproduce two important mural fragments from *Himalayan Art*. The manuscript was meticulously typed by Mrs. Yuki Nagano and a number of other friends and colleagues at the museum aided the project in innumerable ways. Mrs. Judith Sherman and Ms. Patricia Pendleton helped me prepare the index. To all of them, my sincere thanks.

The reproduction of six of the paintings in colour was made possible through generous subsidy from Dr. Edwin Binney, 3rd, Jeff and Anita Holmgrin, Doris and Ed Wiener and Jack and Muriel Zimmerman. Without their financial assistance, the book would have been visually much poorer.

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CHAPTER ONE

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

I

Until recent times the term "Nepal" was applied only to a small but colourful valley situated almost in the middle of the much larger kingdom that is known by the same name today. It is this valley which has remained the principal cradle of Nepali culture from times immemorial, and, apart from the name, gives the kingdom its national character. The Nepali paintings discussed in this volume were all created in this valley, which is an area less than two hundred miles square. The valley is also often referred to as the Kathmandu Valley after the capital city.

The history of Nepal is divided roughly into four periods which are labelled Licchavi (ca. 400-800 A.D.), Transitional or post-Licchavi (800-1200), Malla (1200-1769) and Shāh (1769 to date). Licchavi is the name of a dynasty which ruled the valley and its environs almost continuously between the fifth and the eighth century, except for a possible interregnum during ~~the~~ first four decades of the seventh century. However, we are not directly concerned with the political or cultural history of Licchavi Nepal since no paintings from the period have survived.[1] Judging by the rich sculptural remains, it can be postulated with a certain degree of confidence that the art of painting also flourished in Licchavi Nepal. The Chinese testimony,[2] based on contemporary evidence, speaks quite eloquently about the houses in the valley which were embellished with both sculpture and painting. Although no example of the latter has survived, in view of the astonishing cultural continuum in the valley, one can surmise that the murals noticed by the seventh century Chinese ambassador Wang Hsüan-tse must have been very much like those that adorn the walls of houses today (Figs. 10, 160, 163).

The Chinese ambassador's observations are in part corroborated by an even earlier inscription. In fact, the earliest inscription discovered so far in the valley and attributed to the mid-fifth century informs us that a Buddhist temple dedicated by a lady was decorated with the Kinnarī Jākata and other pictures.[3] We know that murals were also employed to embellish monasteries in contemporary India, Central Asia, and subsequently in Tibet. However, one of the few instances where a cultural tradition did not continue into present day Nepal may be observed in the curious absence of murals of any quality in the numerous surviving monasteries, some of which may be very ancient foundations. We must, of course, remember that apart from wide-spread destruction suffered by these monuments due to both natural and man-made causes, generally Buddhism has been steadily declining since at least the fifteenth century, and even now the monasteries are visibly demonstrating the lack of interest and patronage in simple maintenance. Not surprisingly, therefore, when the monasteries were rebuilt or renovated during the Malla period, the congregations probably found it difficult enough to raise money for essential repairs, leave alone indulging in the luxury of adorning them with murals. For that matter, even the important Hindu temples are generally devoid of murals. It must also be remembered that during the Malla period Nepali artists were in great demand in Tibet, as we shall discuss later in this volume, and there is ample reason to believe that much of the murals seen in Tibetan monasteries were rendered by Nepali artists. Invitations to paint murals in Tibet must have been especially welcome for the artists of the valley as it came precisely at a time when their own monasteries could no longer employ them. Thus, the monasteries of Tibet provide us with a richer source for the study of Buddhist murals of Nepal as they must have been seen and admired by monks and pilgrims not only in the Malla but also in the earlier periods. I have elsewhere[4] demonstrated how vital and creative the sculptural tradition of Licchavi Nepal was, and there seems no reason to believe that the art of painting was not equally sophisticated. In fact, when we do encounter paintings in the eleventh century, it becomes clear that they continue an earlier and well-developed pictorial tradition.

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[1] Readers are referred to P. Pal, *The Arts of Nepal, I: Sculpture*, Leiden, 1974, pp. 1 ff. for further information.

[2] *Idem*, p. 6.

It is now generally well-known that the cultural life of Licchavi Nepal was profoundly influenced by contemporary Indian civilization. Sanskrit was the language of the courts, the religious and social life came increasingly under the influence of the Indian sacred literature such as the *dharmaśāstras* and *purāṇas*, the administrative and judicial systems were modelled upon those prevailing in Gupta India, and, finally, the visual arts employed the norms and styles established by Indian artists during the Kuṣāṇa and early Gupta periods. In view of the close relationship between the Gupta sculptural tradition and that of Licchavi Nepal, one could with some justification assume that the Kinnarī Jātaka painted on the walls of a fifth century Buddhist temple must have been rendered in the same basic style as the murals at Ajanta or other Gupta monuments. Although we have no surviving examples of painting from the Licchavi period, we can well imagine what they looked like from such eleventh century manuscript illumination as the Vessantara Jātaka (Fig. 32). Almost all scholars who have written about it have stressed the direct relationship of this style with the pictorial tradition of Ajanta. Decades ago, with reference to this manuscript cover, Stella Kramrisch wrote: "Their colour-prisms, a feature fully expatiated upon from the earliest paintings in Ajanta, are employed in this case so as to contain each scene as if in a flat conch shell."[5] Kramrisch goes on to state that the Ajanta tradition supplies the setting for the figurative forms. However, it seems to us that rather than relate this twelfth century cover directly to the fifth century Ajanta murals, it would be more convincing to cite models within Nepal. Although we do not possess any painted examples, there can be little doubt that the Vessantara Jātaka representation continues the pictorial tradition which we encounter in some fragmentary narrative reliefs from about the seventh century.[6] That the reliefs themselves are based upon some lost painted depictions seems self-evident. Indeed, one must admit that the entire tradition of narrative relief in both Indian and Nepali art was closely related to painted scrolls of the type known as *caraṇacitra*, the history of which is far older than that of lithic reliefs.

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[3] D. Vajracharyya, *Licchavikalkā Abhilekh* [Inscriptions of the Licchavi Period], p. 1. *suciraṁkālambavanambhavavicchidaḥ kinnarījātakākīrṇannānā citravirājitaṁ*. The word *citra*, however, was employed for both painting and sculpture, and the use of the word *ākīrṇa* is unusual, for it means "filled, spread or surrounded". It seems therefore, to imply a mural rather than a relief.

[4] Pal, *op. cit.*

Such scrolls, along with other forms of paintings, must have entered the valley with pilgrims, monks and merchants from India even during pre-Licchavi days. According to early Buddhist texts Indian merchants were trading with the valley as early as the time of the Buddha (5th-6th century B.C.), and blankets from Nepal were evidently sought after in Maurya India (4th-3rd c. B.C.). Commerce has always been an unwitting vehicle for transporting both religious and artistic ideas, and it would not be too far-fetched to assume that during the age of the Licchavis, apart from traders, Buddhist monks, brahmans, scribes and even artists from India visited the valley from time to time, some to live permanently. Some of them must have brought examples of bronzes and pictures which could have served as models for local artists.

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[5] S. Kramrisch, "Nepalese Paintings", p. 135.

[6] Pal, *op. cit.*, pp. 258-262.

II

Little is known of the Licchavis following the rule of Jayadeva II (ca. A.D. 750). In fact, the valley's political history during the next three hundred and fifty years or so is very sketchy, much of the information being obtained from post-colophon statements of manuscripts. Many of these manuscripts from about the eleventh century bear illuminations and, as we shall discuss in a subsequent chapter, they form the earliest examples of Nepali painting. The only memorable event of this period recorded by tradition and the dynastic chronicles (*vaṁśāvalī*) is the start of a new era by King Rāghavadeva in A.D. 879. Thereafter, in most documents, such as manuscripts and paintings discussed here, the date is invariably given in this era, which is called the *Nepāla saṁvat.* Presumably, in deference to the Newars, who were among the earliest settlers in the valley, the era is also designated as Newari. What prompted King Rāghavadeva to suddenly begin a new era is not known, but the fact that it came to be called the Nepāla saṁvat soon after its inception does indicate a growing consciousness of a regional, if not a national, identity.

Although we know little or nothing about the political history of the Post-Licchavi period, a fairly clear picture of the cultural life can be gleaned from surviving documents. Religious benefactions in the form of land grants, building temples and monasteries, and commissioning books and images, continued to play an important role in the life of the nobility and the mercantile class. Some of the relevant information about donors will be discussed in the next chapter, but it is interesting to note that several kings are mentioned both in the traditional chronicles as well as in the colophons of manuscripts as having built or renovated monasteries and temples. And since religion was the principal motivating factor for artistic creation, there can be no doubt that the artists and craftsmen continued to prosper regardless of the political vicissitudes of the valley.

In terms of the history of religion the Post-Licchavi period is particularly significant. Buddhism in the valley achieved a new peak, especially in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, following the destruction of the monasteries in Eastern India. The earlier visit of the celebrated Atīśa Dipaṅkara Śrījñāna in the eleventh century must have been an event of great significance for Nepali Buddhism. Atīśa was the chief abbot of what was then the most famous centre of Buddhism on the subcontinent, the monastic university of Nalanda. Although Atīśa was on his way to Tibet, his brief sojourn in the valley must have considerably enhanced the prestige of the local monasteries, at least in the eyes of the Tibetans. Thereafter, Tibetan monks and adepts visited the religious establishments regularly, and a large corpus of sacred books, piously copied by Nepali scribes, found their way into Tibetan monasteries.

Atīśa was neither the first nor the last of the Indian luminaries to visit Nepal. Tārānātha, a seventeenth century Tibetan polymath, records the arrival of several others in the valley as early as the Licchavi period. According to him, Vasubandhu is said to have come to Nepal in the fourth century and to have introduced Tāntric cults there.[7] The famous Śāntarakṣita apparently met Padmasambhava in Nepal in the eighth century, while several yogis, nāthas and siddhas may well have visited the valley between the eighth and the twelfth century, the most well-known amongst whom are Matsyendranātha and Gorakhnātha. The last great Indian pundit who, along with many other monks and teachers, sought refuge in the valley after the destruction of the famous Indian monasteries by invading Muslims, was Ratnarakṣita, about whom more will be said presently.

That the period was particularly felicitous for Buddhism is also evident from the large number of manuscripts of diverse Buddhist texts which were copied in the monasteries. A great amount of surviving manuscripts, copied and illuminated between the eleventh and the thirteenth centuries, demonstrate the keen interest of local Buddhists in both Mahāyāna and Vajrayāna texts. Indeed, although Vasubandhu is said to have introduced Tāntric cults and rites as early as the fourth century, and there is some evidence to believe that they were familiar in Licchavi Nepal, Tāntrism really became more pervasive after the tenth century. The frequent visits of the nāthas and siddhas must have largely contributed to the proliferation of Tāntric ideas and by the time Ratnarakṣita arrived, the valley was ready and receptive.

According to Tārānātha "the Great Master Ratnarakṣita was equal in knowledge with Śākyaśri (the great pundit of Kashmir) so far as the Perfection Wisdom teachings and the sciences generally were concerned. In logic Śākyaśri was more capable, but in mantras the former was said to be more skilled. In the exercise of spiritual and magical power they were considered equal. Ratnarakṣita belonged to the

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[7] D. L. Snellgrove, *Buddhist Himalaya*, p. 101.

Mahāsāṅghika Order and was Master of Mantras at Vikramaśīla."[8] This brief resume of Ratnarakṣita's qualifications and interests clearly indicates how important a role both tantra and mantra had come to play in Buddhism during this period. The surviving literary evidence certainly corroborates Tārānatha's observations, and it would hardly be an exaggeration to say that Tāntrism was firmly entrenched in the valley during the Post-Licchavi period. Since Tāntrism, about which more will be said presently, was also basic to Hindu cults and rituals and given the diminutive size of the valley, the distinction between the various sects, such as Buddhism, Śivaism, etc. became increasingly blurred and paved the way for the ultimate preponderance of Hinduism over Buddhism. However, while in India Buddhism was totally absorbed into Hinduism, in Nepal it has continued to survive till the present day, although not in its earlier form.

III

Beginning with Arimalla, about whom we have virtually no information except that he ruled from 1200 until 1216, most subsequent rulers until the arrival of Pṛthivī Nārāyaṇa Shāh in 1769, added the honorific suffix *malla,* meaning valiant, to their names and hence the designation Malla period. Certainly the name malla has no dynastic significance and there is nothing to show that Arimalla established a new dynasty. Until the accession of Sthitirāja[9] towards the end of the fourteenth century, there was no substantive change either in the administrative or socio-political structure of the valley. Little is known of the relation between the Mallas and their contemporary rulers in India, but trade between the two countries must have flourished and pilgrims must have crossed the borders as easily and as frequently as they still do.

What is regarded as the distinctive cultural character of Nepal is essentially the legacy of the Malla period. Although the history of the three principal towns of the valley, Kathmandu, Patan, and Bhadgaon, can be traced back to much earlier times, they began to assume their present character mostly during the Malla period. Patan was certainly the premier town in eleventh century Nepal and must

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[8] *Idem,* pp. 105-106.

[9] More will be said about this king later, but it should be recorded that until now all scholars, including the present author, have used his name as Sthitimalla, which is an unfortunate truncated version of Sthitirāja-malla. Virtually all documents of his time address him as Sthitirāja.

रवि शाक्य

have been a bustling centre of religious and intellectual activity. It was also the most notable centre of artistic activity and remained so into the modern age. However, both Kathmandu and Bhadgaon continued to expand and certainly during the Malla period came to rival Patan in political importance. Patan had always been predominantly Buddhist, while Bhadgaon has remained essentially a Hindu town. Kathmandu evolved as a more eclectic settlement although with a stronger bias for Buddhism. The Buddhist paintings discussed in this book were mostly painted either in Kathmandu or Patan, while some of the later Hindu paintings were almost certainly rendered in Bhadgaon.

During the post-Licchavi and the early Malla periods, several feudal families, such as the Mahāpātras of Patan and the Rāmas of Banepa, played a remarkably significant role in the political life of the valley and were among the most generous patrons of the arts. It was with the help of the Rāmas of Banepa that Sthitirājamalla brought the factious nobles under control and unified the valley once again under one crown in the year 1382. Prior to Sthitirāja's rise to power, the valley had suffered numerous foreign attacks by the Khasa rulers from the west and the Tirhūtiyas and Muslims from the south. Some of these invasions were particularly disastrous for the towns and monuments which were set afire and destroyed. In addition, periodical earthquakes took their toll, and hence only a few buildings earlier than the thirteenth century have survived. Obviously, the wall-paintings which decorated the earlier temples and monasteries must also have perished due either to fires or earthquakes. Since Buddhist paintings were often dedicated and deposited in monasteries, it is not surprising that so few surviving examples can be attributed a date earlier than A.D. 1349/50, when Sultān Shamsud-din Ilyas of Bengal set the towns aflame.

Sthitirāja may have been an adventurer from Mithila, or a local noble, who had married into the royal family of Bhadgaon and, taking advantage of the prevailing political disorder, succeeded in seizing power. However, he spent a far longer time seeking power than enjoying it, for his reign lasted only a little over a dozen years. Although traditionally he is remembered as a great monarch and a large number of documents from his reign has survived, we really have remarkably little information about him. It is generally believed that he altered the social structure of the valley, but there seems no evidence to support this idea. It is possible that he did make sweeping administrative reforms and set in motion the process which ultimately destroyed the power of the feudal chieftains. That there were significant administrative changes during this period is also evident from the fact that the ancient designations for court officials, which had been in usuage continuously from the Licchavi period onwards, were now replaced by new titles.

Whether or not he effected social or administrative reforms, Sthitirājamalla did usher in a new era in Nepali history. The dynasty which he founded ruled the valley continuously, although not always with harmony and unity, until the arrival of the Gurkhās. He was the first ruler to consider himself an incarnation of Viṣṇu and most subsequent monarchs, including the Shāhs, have claimed the same divine status. He initiated the worship of the tutelary royal goddess Māneśvarī, a cult which was continued by all his successors. More importantly, Sthitirāja was the first monarch to elevate Newari to the status of a na[illegible]nguage and thereby not only brought the government closer to the peo[illegible]ed to foster a spirit of national pride and self-consciousness among his subjects. [illegible] addition, Sthitirāja was an enlightened patron of the arts and letters and encouraged both the composition and performance of dramas. Several Sanskrit plays were written under his auspices and performed at court on special occasions. Whatever their political follies and preoccupations, most of the later Mallas continued this enlightened patronage of the arts, and quite a few of them were themselves scholars and poets.

The fifteenth century may well be characterized as the age of Yakṣamalla, who came to the throne in 1428 and died in 1480. A grandson of Sthitirāja, Yakṣa was obviously a chip off the old block, and his long and generally peaceful reign was particularly felicitous for the valley. The seed of national self-consciousness sowed by his grandfather had begun to sprout, and it was Yakṣamalla who nurtured the sapling and watched it grow into a sturdy tree. The only Malla king with territorial ambitions beyond the valley, he led several expeditions into India and Tibet. Although these had no lasting political impact, they must have instilled in his subjects a new sense of self-confidence. The incursions into Tibet may have been motivated by economic gains, for Sel-dkar-rdson, which he conquered, was an important trading post on the Nepal-Lhasa route. He continued many of the policies launched by his great-grandfather and at his death he left behind a kingdom certainly more unified and prosperous than that which he had inherited.

The political history of the later Mallas from the death of Yakṣamalla until the Gurkha conquest in 1768/69 is a dreary tale of internecine wars and factious struggles for power. The kingdom which Sthitirāja so astutely united towards the end of the fourteenth century and which his grandson so efficiently held together for over fifty years was carved up into three kingdoms soon after Yakṣamalla's death. For a while different members of the Malla family ruled the valley from the three towns of Bhadgaon, Kathmandu and Benepa. Eventually Bhadgaon absorbed Banepa and in 1603 Patan seceded from Kathmandu to become the capital of the third kingdom.

What is remarkable is that—despite the fact that three courts had now to be maintained by the same economy, in addition to the financial burdens imposed by frequent warfares between them—so much wealth should have been available for almost incessant building activities and religious benefactions. It is truly amazing that the magnificent palaces and the myriads of temples which today adorn the three principal towns were built during the three centuries of Malla rule by the successors of Yakṣamalla and their affluent subjects. Notwithstanding the political factiousness and bloody battles, the period of the later Mallas remains the most glorious in the history of Nepali architecture, and generally it was a remarkably productive period for other cultural activities as well. The Newari language and literature flourished in an unprecedented manner, and most Malla kings were particularly fond of the stage. Dramas were written and performed for special occasions, such as coronations and weddings and many kings were patrons of music, as we will have occasion to mention later. The majority of the paintings discussed in this volume belongs to the Malla period.

It is somewhat curious that, but for the ephemeral incursions of Sultān Shamsuddin Ilyas in the mid-fourteenth century, no other Muslim king of India attempted to conquer this fertile and picturesque valley. Doubtless, Nepal's isolated geographical position to a large extent ensured her independence, for the mountains provided ideal natural fortifications. It has been suggested that during the fourteenth century Nepal may have paid nominal allegiance to Alauddin Khalji, the Sultan of Delhi, and possibly again to the Mughal Emperor Akbar in the second half of the sixteenth century, but there is no positive evidence to corroborate either suggestion. Certainly the influence of Muslim culture on fifteenth and sixteenth century Nepal is marginal, if perceptible at all. However, as we will discuss in the final chapter, Nepali courts did come under stronger influences of Mughal culture in the seventeenth century.

By the middle of the following century Pṛthivī Nārāyaṇa Shāh, the ambitious king of Gurkhā, situated some sixty miles west of the Nepal valley, was already sweeping down from the surrounding hills in sporadic attacks. Taking advantage of the jealousies and rivalries between the three courts, he succeeded in conquering the valley in 1768/69 and thus once more united the various kingdoms under one crown. One of his descendents still reigns over a kingdom that is today twice as large as that over which Pṛthivī had ruled. It is somewhat ironical that despite the physical expansion of the kingdom under the Shāhs, the cultural life was not enriched noticeably, and virtually all the arts, architecture and literature which one admires today are the legacies of Malla Nepal.

IV

Religion was the primary inspiring force behind most of the paintings created by the artists of Nepal. The two major religions are known today by the convenient blanket terms Hinduism and Buddhism. The tenets of both religions were imported from India, but the two faiths did develop peculiarities which are distinctly local. Furthermore, the general populace is not too concerned with the differences between the two religions and worship each other's deities quite freely.

Hinduism is possibly the most complex religious system evolved by man and it will not be possible here even to summarize its principal characteristics. We are concerned primarily with its mythology and pantheon which provided the artists with the themes for their paintings. Moreover, since no Nepali painting earlier than the eleventh century has yet been discovered, it is unnecessary to review the earlier history of either Hinduism or Buddhism.

By the eleventh century the three most important religious systems of Hinduism were Śivaism, Viṣṇuism and Śaktism. Along with Brahmā, Śiva and Viṣṇu form what is known as the Trinity of Hinduism. No exclusive religious system evolved around Brahmā, but Śiva and Viṣṇu became as it were the twin suns in the Hindu religious firmament. The word *śakti* literally means energy, and it was employed to designate the cult of the primordial Goddess who was regarded as the source of all cosmic energy and creative force. Although the Śāktas, the followers of Śakti, are distinct from the Śaivas and the Vaiṣṇavas, the concept of Śakti has profoundly influenced all religious systems, especially under the influence of Tāntrism about which more will be said presently.

Of the surviving examples of Hindu painting, most relate to Viṣṇuism. The Śaivas are primarily worshippers of the phallic emblem of their god, and even in sculptural representations relatively few anthropomorphic forms are encountered. Paintings of Śaiva and Śākta subjects are quite rare, and only a few examples are known. It was more customary among the Vaiṣṇavas to dedicate paintings, particularly to commemorate the performance of a rite known as *Anantavrata*, which appears to have been the most important Vaiṣṇava rite observed in the valley.

Generally, Viṣṇu is represented in his *para* or supreme manifestation, accompanied by his wife Śrī-Lakṣmī and his devoted mount, Garuḍa, a half-avian, half-human creature. The Goddess is worshipped primarily as Durgā, the destroyer of the buffalo demon, and more commonly she is addressed as Bhagavatī. Although numerous sculptural representations of Durgā are known, only one painted icon has so far come to light. Among other prominent forms of the Goddess worshipped in Nepal are the Mothers (Mātṛkā) and Guhyakālī, an esoteric image which was especially popular in the valley. The most familiar Hindu text is possibly the *Devīmāhātmya* or *Caṇḍī* which is an eulogy of the Goddess in her role as the destroyer of evil. Devout Hindus still read or have the text read by brahmans and literally worship the manuscripts. The *Devīmāhātmya* was, therefore, often copied and illuminated, and its stories of the violent struggle between the forces of good and evil were used for murals in both the Bhadgaon and Kathmandu palaces.

For mythological subjects the artists depended largely upon the two great Hindu epics, the *Mahābhārata* and the *Rāmāyaṇa*, and a class of literature known by the generic term *purāṇa*, meaning that which is ancient. The two epics and the purāṇas can be regarded as the most important repositories of Hindu religion and tradition. Not only do they contain purley theological subjects, philosophical speculations, pseudo-historical material and mythologies, but also social rules and regulations as well as detailed discussions about rites and rituals, ceremonies and customs which play so important a role in the daily life of the Hindu. For the artists the mythologies embedded in these texts provided a rich repertoire, but here again far more paintings depict Vaiṣṇava legends than either Śaiva or Śākta. It must be remembered that the purāṇas were all compiled and redacted in India; the mythologies therefore are pan-Indian and usually have no local character. Specific Hindu myths created in Nepal are few and most are included in the *Nepālamāhātmya* section of the *Skanda Purāṇa*. No myths from this work are known to have been painted and only one set of illuminated covers (Figs. 65, 66) may relate to this text. One other Hindu painting (Fig. 136) possibly depicts a locally invented myth connected with a rite in honour of Manavināyaka, a form of the auspicious god Gaṇeśa who is particularly popular in the valley. By and large the Vaiṣṇava myths represented by the artists are stories of Kṛṣṇa, the cowherd god who is adored both as a child and as the romantic lover of the gopīs of Vrindavan. The growing popularity of the Kṛṣṇa cult in Nepal after the fifteenth century is probably due to the closer cultural ties between the valley and Mithila during the Malla period, as I shall discuss at length in the final chapter.

V

Most of the paintings discussed in this book depict Buddhist deities and legends. When exactly Buddhism was introduced into Nepal is not known but some of the early Licchavis may have been Buddhists. Moreover, as I have already mentioned, the earliest known inscription informs us of a Buddhist temple decorated with murals depicting the Kinnarī Jātaka. Indeed, jātakas and avadānas, which are didactic tales recounting the experiences of the Buddha in his innumerable previous births, were particularly popular with the Buddhists in India and provided many of the subjects for early Buddhist art. In Nepal they continued to be represented even as late as the nineteenth century, and, as we shall see, certain jātakas were more favoured than others.

Buddhism during the early Licchavi period must have been a relatively simple religion with the principal objects of veneration being the stupa and the image of the Buddha. However, already by the fifth century, primarily under the influence of Viṣṇuism and Śivaism, Buddhism had been transformed from an austere, monastic faith, with emphasis on personal salvation, meditation and easily comprehen~~sible~~ ethical tenets, into a complex, mystical and image-oriented religion with a growing pantheon of gods and goddesses, known by the specifically Buddhist term "Bodhisattva", which came to be applied to any enlightened being who was willing to help others attain *nirvāṇa* before his own. The Bodhisattva doctrine forms the essence of Mahāyāna Buddhism and it opened the doors for the introduction of devotional cults centered around numerous divine figures which appealed particularly to the average person.

By the eleventh century, when we encounter the first surviving paintings in Nepal, Buddhism had become so elaborate and ritual-oriented that it would hardly have been recognized by the disciples of the Buddha could they have come back to see it. Like the Hindu religions, Buddhism too was now heavily influenced by Tāntric cults and ritual, and the line of distinction between the two religions gradually became indistinguishable. Monasticism began to decline, and Buddhist priests, like their Hindu counterparts, began to marry and came to be known as *vajrācāryas*. Already the Buddhist pantheon was enlarged to include myriads of new divine beings, many of whom were direct adaptations of the leading Hindu deities. Tāntrism proved to be a synthesizing force between the two religious systems not only in terms of ritual, but also in terms of artistic expression, for the gods and goddesses came increasingly to resemble one another.

VI

The expression "tantra" is difficult to explain in simple terms. Like the words *purāṇa* and *sūtra*, *tantra* is applied generically to a class of religious literature, which began to evolve as early as the beginnings of the Christian era and by the end of the tenth century formed the basis of both Hinduism and Buddhism, in theory as well as practice. Basically, Tantra carries the same general meaning of scripture in the sense of any sacred writing (or oral tradition) regarded as authoritative and inviolable. In medieval India, Tantras substituted the Vedas as scriptures for the Hindus, while among the Buddhists they replaced the earlier sūtras in importance. Because of the great variety of Indian cultural patterns and religious experiences, Tāntrism embodies a bewildering diversity of thoughts, beliefs, rituals, rites, as well as mystical and magical practices. Much of Tāntric rituals and practices are performed quite openly but some sects adopted esoteric methods involving sexo-yogic mysticism which has been much maligned and misinterpreted.

Tāntrism does not involve a particular religious system or thought process, and hence its beginnings cannot be pinpointed either in time or space. It incorporates a wide variety of traditions, both orthodox and heterodox, exoteric and esoteric, spiritual and sexual, rational and irrational, as well as intellectual and intuitive. In certain aspects it does reveal a continuity with Vedic culture and ritualism, as for instance in the incorporation of the Vedic *om* as an integral part of all mantras or mystical charms and in the great emphasis it places upon *yoga*. But by and large it introduces an enormous amount of material which is clearly non-Vedic.

Of the several distinctive features of Tāntrism perhaps the most basic is its belief in the complete identification of the adept (*sādhaka*) with divinity. When a true sādhaka contemplates upon divine form, whether verbal or visual, the deity is said to enter into his body and thereby confer upon him divine status. Therefore, particular reverence is attached to the human body and to cults of both physical and spiritual ecstasy. Some Tāntric schools advocated the use of sexo-yogic techniques and erotic mysticism to achieve the ultimate state of bliss (*ānanda* or *mahāsukha*), but it is simplistic to state that "tantra is a cult of ecstasy, focused on a vision of cosmic sexuality".[10] Virtually all worship in a Hindu temple or household is done by Tāntric (or Āgamic) methods, involving neither sex, alcohol, nor meat. What is important to remember is that Tantra developed in a remarkably eclectic fashion, and although in Hindu society the brahmans still maintained their superior position, under the umbrella of Tāntrism they no longer had the exclusive right to worship. Irrespective of sex or caste status, anyone can pursue the path to achieve ultimate bliss, provided he is otherwise qualified. Both psychic and physical preparation is necessary for a person to be initiated and here an important role is played by the guru or the preceptor, who does not have to be a brahman, and who is pivotal in Tāntric religious experience. Among the Buddhists of Nepal, for instance, the *gubhājus*, who are not brahmans, perform the same function.

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[10] P. Rawson, *The Art of Tantra*, Greenwich, Conn. 1973, p. 9.

Fundamental to Tāntrism is the importance of the concept of the Goddess. Indeed, the entire history of the rise of theistic religion in India, which may also be characterized as Tāntric, is intricately interwoven with the gradual ascension of Mother-right as embodied in Śakta ideology. Both Hindu and Buddhist sects came under the influence of Śaktism, the philosophical authority of which seems to stem from Sāṁkhya, one of the six principal schools of Indian philosophy. It must be remembered, however, that the term Śakti, as applied to the Goddess, is employed only in the Hindu context, whereas in Buddhist tantra she is designated as Prajñā, meaning wisdom. Further, while the Hindus believe that Puruṣa (Man) is passive and Prakṛti (Nature-Woman) is the active agent, the Buddhists hold a diametrically opposite view. For them the male representing the method (*upāya-karuṇā* or compassion) is the active principle, while Prajñā is passive. Only the combination of the two, of right method with right knowledge, leads to ultimate bliss known by such terms as *mahāsukha* or *bodhicitta*. Visually Tāntric Buddhists were much bolder than the Hindus and symbolized the concept of bodhicitta in explicit sexual imagery depicting their deities in physical embrace. Such graphic use of sexual imagery is less common in Hindu art, and it must be remembered that paintings representing such subjects, even among the Buddhists, are regarded as esoteric, to be seen only by the initiated.

VII

The Tāntric phase of Buddhism is known generally by the name of Vajrayāna or the Adamantine Path. The Vajrayāna pantheon includes a vast array of deities but it seems that only a few were frequently represented in paintings. One of the most popular divinities is Vasudhārā, the goddess of wealth and prosperity. Another is Amoghapāśa Lokeśvara, a manifestation of Avalokiteśvara, the Bodhisattva *par excellence*, who is responsible for leading all sentient beings towards the right path until the arrival of Maitreya, the future Buddha. Two annual rites, known as

Vasundharāvrata and *Aṣṭamīvrata,* are piously performed by devout Buddhists and the occasions often commemorated by consecrating painted icons. A third popular religious rite is the *Lakṣacaityavrata,* which involved the donation of a hundred thousand caityas. A particular type of painting (Fig. 79, 100), depicting numerous caityas, was commissioned on such occasions and the rite seems to be peculiar to Nepali Buddhism.

Other deities frequently represented in paintings are esoteric gods such as Samvara and Hevajra as well as protective divinities such as Acala Caṇḍamahāroṣaṇa and Mahākāla. Samvara, Hevajra, Acala, et al. are sectarian deities regarded as hierophanies of the Supreme and Transcendental Buddha, who has little to do with the historical founder of the religion. Such esoteric deities are almost invariably portrayed as embracing their female partners and their imagery is often visually compelling. Elaborate symbolical explanations of these esoteric forms are given in theological texts, but basically, all of them symbolize the state of spiritual equipoise in which the ego is non-existent. In that state "the *yogin* as Means (*upāya*) is absorbed into Wisdom (*prajñā*), and the Great Bliss (*mahāsukha*) is achieved."[11]

Mahākāla is a very special god in Nepal and so universal is his veneration that he demonstrates most persuasively the harmonious religious climate in the valley. Both conceptually and iconographically Mahākāla is none other than Śiva as the Lord of Time. Indeed, it is curious that while as Bhairava, which is the more common appellation for the wrathful manifestation of Śiva, he is trampelled by Samvara in many representations, the same image, as Mahākāla, is an object of unqualified adoration. Apart from Mahākāla, popular deities such as Durgā, Gaṇeśa, the Nine Planets (*Navagraha*) are also worshipped by Hindus and Buddhists alike. Although Buddhism has been steadily waning in the valley, it is still the only region in the world where it co-exists peacefully with Hinduism. Paśupatinātha, undoubtedly the premier god in the valley, is adored by the entire populace irrespective of his or her personal sectarian beliefs. This catholic spirit was in a good measure fostered by both ritual and iconography, for the same aesthetic norms and canons were employed to paint the images, whether Hindu or Buddhist.

The most important difference between the Vedic and the Tāntric mode of worship is the ubiquitous use of images in the latter. Indeed, the systematized expansion and popularity of theistic cults in India around the beginning of the Christian era seem precisely to coincide with the development of Tāntrism as a valid and authoritative religious force. Religious icons, which form the principal examples of Nepali painting, played an essential role in Tāntric liturgy. For the enlightened the image is only a symbol since the Ultimate Principle or the Absolute has no definable characteristics. For the ordinary person, however, the image has always remained a manifestational expression of divine nature and has served as an important aid in meditation. At least three persons were directly involved in the creation of an icon: the patron, the priest or mystic, and the artist. The artistic milieu in which they combined their tastes and talents, their visions and imagination, will form the subject of the next chapter.

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[11] D. Snellgrove, *The Hevajra Tantra,* Part I, London, 1954, p. 44.

CHAPTER TWO

THE ARTISTIC MILIEU

I

Like their counterparts in India, the artists in Nepal too remained mostly anonymous. Only a few names of artists have survived and almost nothing is known of their lives or personalities. Indeed, in the Nepali context, even more so than in the Indian, one may easily be led to believe that there is no such person as an artist, there is only art.

The principal sources of our knowledge, for both artists and patrons, are post-colophon statements in manuscripts and dedicatory inscriptions on paintings. Generally these provide us with perfunctory information regarding the donors, but occasionally they do enlighten us, however dimly, about the artists. The post-colophon statements frequently include names of scribes who were responsible for copying the manuscripts, but whether the same person also illuminated them cannot be ascertained. Probably the scribe and the artist were two different persons, although it is not impossible that some of the professional scribes were artists as well.

The most significant inscription concerning an artist is that which occurs on the 1420 Viṣṇumandala at Los Angeles (Figs. 1, 188). The inscription states that the painting was consecrated on the occasion of the performance of a Vaiṣṇava rite by Tejarāma Somaśarman and members of his family. More significantly, we are informed that the painting (*idaṁ paṭa*) was painted (*likhitaṁ*) by Tejarāma himself. Several interesting inferences can be drawn from this fascinating inscription.

First of all, we learn that such a painting was called a *paṭa*; secondly, the same word *likhita* was used for both writing and painting. More importantly, not only was the artist himself the patron, but he was also a high class brahman, as his title *somaśarman* indicates. Thus, apart from his name we know his caste affiliation, and he appears to have been a person of some substance who may well have been attached to a court as a priest. Apparently some of the vajrācāryas, who are the Buddhist counterparts of brahman priests, still paint religious icons today. We can reasonably surmise, therefore, that it was customary for members of the priestly caste of both religions to paint images, and, judging by Tejarāma's work, some of them were obviously accomplished artists. Among the Buddhist monks too there were possibly some who illuminated manuscripts or painted religious icons.

There is no way to determine whether Tejarāma was a Newar, but we do know that much of Nepal's art was created by the Newars, an ethnic group which has remained largely responsible for shaping the country's distinctive culture. In the class structure of today's society, as a general rule, the artists belong to the lower strata. According to the traditional classification, along with the wood-carvers and the bronze-casters, the artists (*citrakāra*) are grouped together towards the bottom of the list.[1] The *pums* or painters in general are among the lowest sub-caste, but the *nikhu*, who is a painter of religious images, enjoys a relatively higher status.[2] Since the painters belonged to one or two sub-castes, very likely the profession was hereditary or confined to members of the same caste. However, as in medieval Europe so also in Nepal, there must have been professional guilds of craftsmen as well as important ateliers presided over by recognized masters. That there were guilds of other professions is known both from epigraphical and literary sources.

If the information about the artist is meagre, not much is known about the patron either. One may generally state that, by and large, the arts were patronized by the affluent and the upper classes. Although very few surviving paintings were direct commissions of kings, some of them must have been generous patrons, for they are remembered for other forms of religious benefactions. Certainly their interest in literature and religious texts was keen and sincere, and many of the later Malla kings were themselves authors.[3] After the fourteenth century, the stage was especially patronized by the ruling monarchs, a number of whom composed original dramas. However, it must be pointed out that although countless manuscripts have survived from the period between the eleventh and the fourteenth centuries only a few were commissioned by royal patrons. It seems clear that patronage of the scribes and illuminators during the Post-Licchavi period was extended more frequently by either religious personages, such as monks and vajrācāryas, or by the nobility and the mercantile class. The bhāros, representing a class of wealthy merchants, were among the most avid patrons of the arts.

None of the illuminated manuscripts or religious paintings were commissioned purely for aesthetic reasons. Some books were dedicated for bringing peace to the land in troubled times, some for the donor's edification, and still others were intended as pious gifts, but primarily they were copied for the spiritual benefit of the donor. Religious paintings were generally dedicated to commemorate a deceased member of a family, or to celebrate the successful observance of a particular ceremony or rite. Others, especially those that portray esoteric subjects, served as personal icons and were worshipped. Irrespective of the immediate function, however, it is universally believed, both in Nepal and India, that the act of commissioning a religious work not only benefits the donor and his immediate family, both materially and spiritually, but also brings blessings to entire mankind.

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[1] See, L. Petech, *Medieval History of Nepal*, pp. 182-183.

[2] *Idem*, pp. 187-188.

[3] For the literary tastes and creations of the Malla kings, see D. R. Regmi, *Medieval Nepal*, II, pp. 833 ff.

But for the obvious inference that the artist must have been paid for his work, little is known of the relationship between patron and artist. The subject matter of a painting was probably selected either by the patron or his priest, but almost certainly neither exerted any direct influence upon the style of the work. It seems a reasonable assumption that one or more artists, or a particular family, remained loosely attached to a monastery, a court or a rich family, although it is doubtful whether they were retained exclusively. Even when there were three kingdoms in the valley during the late Malla period the artists apparently moved about freely from one kingdom to another. Of course, it would have been natural for these courts to have retained artists, just as they did poets and musicians. Judging by the strong conformity in the styles of buildings, as well as the extant murals in the palaces at Kathmandu and Bhadgaon, it appears that if the same artists did not work at both places, certainly they were trained in the same atelier. Similarly, the same basic style may be observed in the murals decorating the Taleju temple at Bhadgaon and the Bāgh-Bhairava temple at Kirtipur, which was part of the Patan kingdom.

Although the texts tell us that the artist had to purify his mind before he began painting, his personal religious belief had little to do with his vocation. The majority of the artists are Buddhist by faith, and yet, many of them are called upon to execute images of Hindu divinities. It will be evident from a cursory glance at the illustrations that the same style was employed for both Buddhist and Hindu paintings. There seems no reason to believe that the artist himself was a mystic or a yogi in the religious sense. He was a yogi only in so far as art itself is considered to be a form of yoga, and the artist must therefore control his fugitive emotions and, by unflinching concentration, conceptualize and realize a particular subject before giving it form on the canvas.

II

The verbal descriptions for the divine images which the artist had to paint were formulated by theologians and mystics. The majority of the divinities arrived from India, at times in the form of small bronzes and terracotta plaques, at others as manuscript illuminations and paintings, but mostly as textual descriptions. Generally, the artist had access to two types of iconographic manuals; those which contained descriptions of the basic skeletal forms of deities and others which were concerned primarily with iconometric lineaments such as proportions, etc. The method of instruction was verbal and was handed down by teacher to pupil. However, in view of the large variety of deities represented, even the most prodigious memory could hardly be expected to retain detailed descriptions of each and every divinity. Frequently, therefore, the artist had to resort to textual descriptions which were written in Sanskrit, a language he probably did not always know. Thus, if the artist was not also a priest, he must have closely cooperated with one, at least in organizing the iconographic programme of his painting, especially if it was something as complex as a mandala. Apart from written or verbal instructions, if the artist worked from sketchbooks, none remains today (see appendix); but there are standard sketchbooks containing freehand drawings of images, gestures, postures and emblems which were used by the priests. Apart from the fact that some of them are competently drawn, it is obvious that they may have served as visual models for the artists as well.

Several manuscripts containing painted sketches of gestures have been preserved. Some of these are drawn rather freely, but others reflect greater care and are of considerable artistic merit. The two folios illustrated here (Figs. 2,3) belong to seventeenth century manuscripts and the drawing in both is particularly refined. The slender, graceful fingers seem indeed to resemble bean-pods, as is prescribed in aesthetic manuals. The inscription above each drawing identifies the gesture and sometimes defines its liturgical function, for gestures are of immense significance in both Hindu and Buddhist ritual. Moreover, in the Denver folio (Fig. 2) different colours are recommended for the various hand poses. Thus, black is prescribed for *vajrāsana*, which is the first drawing, while white is recommended for *vajracakra*, depicted in the third panel. The vajracakra gesture also occurs in the other manuscript, although the gestures there are not always given specific names.

Interesting as these two manuscripts are, two folios from a Copenhagen manuscript (Fig. 4) are even more important, for here we have drawings of complete figures. The illustrations depict five different representations of the same deity called Vajrapātālamahākrodharāja. The emphasis here seems to be on postures with rather uncommon names, such as *kurmapāda, vṛtta, āvṛtta, siṁhanapāda* and *siṁhaprāntapāda*. The differences between the last two are indeed slight, while the first and the third are seemingly identical.

Similar sketchbooks or visual models must have been employed by the priests and the artists far more commonly than is known. They would further account for the astonishing persistence of styles and manners over a prolonged period of time. Sketchbooks of this kind must indeed have been among the principal carriers of the iconographic tradition from India into Nepal as well as into other countries where Indian religions travelled. Apart from these, the artist had at his disposal verbal models which provided him with fairly detailed descriptions of the gods and goddesses he was expected to represent.

The iconographic description from which an artist worked is known as a *dhyāna* or a *sādhana*. In reality a sādhana is an aid to a priest or an adept to help him visualize in his mind the form of the deity. For example, the dhyāna for Vasudhārā, when stripped to the essentials which are relevant for the artist, is as follows: the goddess should be youthful, of yellow complexion and should have one head and six arms. She should be seated in *lalitāsana* and be richly adorned with all the appropriate ornaments. Her right hands should display the gesture of munificence, a spray of gems and the gesture of adoring a Tathāgata. The three left hands should bear the auspicious pot, a sheaf of grain and a manuscript.

Such a brief description provided the artist with the bare skeleton to which he had to add flesh from his own imagination. At least three representations of the goddess Vasudhārā (Figs. 85, 97, 99) must have been based upon the verbal description outlined above, and yet it is remarkable how different each is from the other. The artist responsible for the Zimmerman painting appears to have employed a slightly different canon of proportions, for his Vasudhārā is noticeably taller and slimmer than the other two representations. Such differences in the proportions of the figures may further be noted in other paintings portraying the same deity. The two figures of Caṇḍamahāroṣaṇa (Figs. 109, 110) are identical iconographically, and yet in terms of their lineaments and expression they are perceptively different. Thus, canons of proportions, which were codified in religious literature, often played a significant role in determining the formal variations apparent in the representations of divinities. That such instructions were based on mathematical calculations can be gleaned from a drawing of a Buddha image (Fig. 5) in which certain precise measurements govern the figurative form. Rules of proportions were rigidly followed especially when delineating divine figures, as is evident from the Viṣṇumandala and an unfinished painting of Amoghapāśa Lokeśvara (Figs. 1, 6). In both, the principal figures are drawn on a measured graph used as a grid by the artist. In the Viṣṇumandala the centre of the mandala coincides with the middle of Viṣṇu's chest. In the other, the artist has clearly defined and graphed a measured space in the centre of the painting for Amoghapāśa since his is the divine form, while the remaining figures are more freely drawn. Indeed, as we will have occasion to see throughout this book, even when not rendering images of deities, the artist enjoyed limited freedom in determining the overall organization of his composition or in the delineation of details. Much of the compositional scheme and ornamental patterns were established by convention, and generally the artist had to work within the limited framework of the tradition he inherited.

III

In an age when most artists feel a compulsive need to display their "originality", it is perhaps difficult to understand that in religious art conformity was deemed a virtue, and patrons often demanded exact copies of especially sacrosanct icons. Copies were also made when a memorable painting faded due to age or was damaged for some reason. Sometimes the copy would scrupulously adhere to the model and at other times the artist introduced minor variations, but in either case, the practice helped to prolong styles and manners and discouraged radical changes. While an earlier painting was copied, the older inscription was occasionally copied verbatim, and hence, each inscription should be carefully examined before a given date is accepted. Generally, however, a subsequent addendum to the inscription clearly states that the painting was a later restoration or a replacement. If the original belonged to a monastery, chances are that it would be stored away somewhere; privately owned examples may have been discarded. Fortunately, two such replacements have survived, and they shed considerable light on the prolonged survival of a style and help us to determine how far a later artist deviated from the original.

The Los Angeles County Museum of Art has a partly damaged painting with a long inscription (Fig. 7). The painting is somewhat unusual both in terms of its shape and subject matter. However, a second painting, now preserved in the Bharat Kala Bhavan at Banaras (Fig. 8) not only makes it clear that the Los Angeles example must be the lower portion of a larger painting, but that it is probably the original from which the later example was copied. Fortunately, the inscription on the Banaras picture is better preserved and helps us to reconstruct the text of the partly damaged inscription on the Los Angeles painting.

The inscriptions inform us that in the year N.S. 565 or 566 (A.D. 1445/6) one Vanaratna, associated with a Govicandra Mahāvihāra, made elaborate ceremonial gifts to fellow Buddhists and to foreign (presumably Indian) yogis and Śaiva ascetics.[4] A pious man, he repeated the ceremonies twenty-two years later in N.S. 588 or A.D. 1468, but died the following year at which time the painting was consecrated in his memory by members of his family. Almost four centuries later in the same monastery, for reasons which remain unknown, the old painting was discarded and a fresh copy made, as is stated in the last sentence of the Banaras inscription. The inscription on the Los Angeles painting ends with the sentence containing the information about Vanaratna's death, the date of which is incontestable, for in both paintings, besides numerals, it is also given in chronogram. Thus, there seems no doubt that the Los Angeles painting represents the lower section of the original consecrated in the Govicandra monastery by Vanaratna's family when this devout and generous man died. We can, therefore, assume that the upper section of the Los Angeles painting also portrayed the Buddha Kanakamuni enthroned with attendant monks, two Tathāgatas and two mahāsiddhas, as in the copy. Despite the fact that the nineteenth century artist was expected to make a copy, he was not a blind imitator. Obviously he could not use a new composition, but he did effect changes in the facial features and in the modes of dresses, which reflect textile designs and fashions current in his own time. He has also altered other details, such as the forms of flowers or of the bird, which possibly was intended to be a peacock in both paintings. Finally, he has altogether dispensed with the multi-coloured blocks of stone placed along the entire foreground of the fifteenth century painting. This was one of the conventional formulae for representing stones in pictures of this period (Figs. 78, 87, 89), and obviously the idea here was to depict a paved street, so that the lady who is dispensing gifts appears to be standing outside the portico of her house. The nineteenth century copyist was probably unaware of the significance of the stone blocks and eliminated them altogether.

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[4] Working from a photograph in 1966, and without the knowledge of the Bharat Kala Bhavan painting, I misread the date as 489 (see J. Rosenfield, et al., *The Arts of India and Nepal*, p. 110). I am also happy to acknowledge my indebtedness to Gautamvajra Vajracharya without whose help I could not have understood the entire text of the inscription.

A second instance of a similar copy is provided by another interesting painting of the seventeenth century (Fig. 9). The first part of the dedicatory inscription at the bottom informs us that a painting was consecrated in the year N.S.553/A.D. 1433, when Yakṣamalla was ruling, by Prakulideva on the occasion of his performing the *Bhīmaratha* ceremony. More will be said about this interesting rite in a later chapter; what is of immediate interest to us here is that in the second part of the inscription we are told how, at the instance of one Rāma Bhāro, the artist Ratnasiṁha painted the present example to replace the original. The inscription clearly implies that rather than restore the old painting a fresh copy was being made. Whereas in the case of the Los Angeles painting (Fig. 7) we notice how stylistically different the nineteenth century copy (Fig. 8) is, in this instance there is reason to believe that Ratnasiṁha was a more faithful copyist. For example, the entire compositional treatment of the stupa and the surrounding topography is very similar to that seen in a sixteenth century picture (Fig. 108). Or again, although Ratnasiṁha did dress the figures in the dedicatory panel in the Rajput mode familiar in his own time, those in the principal composition are clothed in fifteenth century style.

No other examples of such copies are known, but a glance at the paintings illustrated in this book will reveal how strictly the artists must have adhered to models which were regarded as particularly sacrosanct. Not only was the iconography of such paintings predetermined by religious needs, but a fairly accurate reproduction of a sacred icon was considered a desideratum. Even when the subject matter was didactic and narrative, a given convention was employed persistently for centuries without notable stylistic changes. Individual predilections and virtuosity were less admired than sound technical craftsmanship and adherence to conventional norms. The artist was less preoccupied with the manner of representation than the representation itself, and stylistic innovations were rare and made gradually.

In reviewing the paintings, rendered over a period of about eight hundred years, one can clearly discern subtle stylistic changes, but they appear more as ripples on the surface of a calm ocean rather than as gigantic waves. For instance, the manuscript illuminations of the eleventh to the thirteenth century are executed in a basically similar style which I have labelled Monastic. During the fourteenth century, however, coinciding with a new interest in Newari culture, the style of paintings begins to change recognizably though not dramatically, as we will discuss in the following chapters. Perhaps the most suitable name, if it is required at all, for the new style is to refer to it as Newari. Finally, more dramatic stylistic changes occured during the seventeenth century when fresh winds blew in from both India and Tibet, but once the extraneous features were assimilated and a new style formulated, it remained the norm for the next two centuries. Notwithstanding such stylistic variations, throughout the history of Nepali painting there was no fundamental change either in the technique or in the aesthetic attitude.

IV

Like the ordinary Indian, the average Nepali who constantly encounters images in the temples and the streets does not view them as works of art as one does today in a museum. For him or her a sculpture or a painting represents primarily a religious image, and he is more accustomed to worshipping it than admiring it as an expression of pure form. The symbolic meaning of an object is therefore of greater concern to him than the external form of the image. This does not imply that he or she is necessarily cognizant of the iconographic significance of a given image. Even the priests today are often unaware of the correct identity and meaning of an icon, especially if it is an old example. What is even more curious is that only a remarkably few educated Indians or Nepalis respond aesthetically to the sculptures and paintings which are so coveted in Europe and America today. However, one need not assume that such was the case always, and it is difficult to believe that some of the paintings did not elicit an aesthetic response from the patrons when they saw the works fresh from the artist's atelier.

A study of the Newari texts[5] on art and aesthetics is yet to be undertaken, but several Indian texts dealing with the visual arts and theories of form and beauty have been preserved; some of these must have been familiar to Newari rhetoricians and aesthetes. Since the artistic tradition of Nepal is fundamentally similar to that which prevailed in India, it would be of interest to review briefly a few of the principles and theories discussed in such texts, for they do help to better appreciate some of the conventions and aesthetic attitudes of the unknown artists. We must remember though that these theories were propounded by pundits, and there is no way to determine the extent of the artists' contribution to their formulation.

Texts concerned with both the performing and the visual arts and architecture are known as *śilpaśāstra*, but discussions about the arts are also embedded in religious texts such as the *purāṇas*. One of the earliest is the *Viṣṇudharmottara Purāṇa*, a text which was well-known in Nepal. Compiled no later than the seventh century, it includes an extensive analysis of the visual arts in a section entitled the *Citrasūtra*. Nevertheless, the most succinct statement regarding the theory of painting is provided not in any śilpaśāstra but by Yośodhara (12th c.) in his commentary on Vātsyāyana's *Kāmasūtra*.

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[5] There are several manuscripts in the National Library in Kathmandu and perhaps a competent Newari scholar will study them some day.

In the *Kāmasūtra*, another popular text in Nepal, Vātsyāyana tells us that every sophisticated gentleman was expected to learn how to paint. His statement obviously applied to princes and aristocrats, although we do not know whether kings in ancient India or Nepal did in fact learn the art. However, in a famous verse in the *Aṭṭhasālinī* the Buddha himself once uses the analogy of painting to explain a philosophical issue, and his statement is certainly that of an aesthete rather than a dilettante.[6] Allusions to artistic princes are more frequent in fiction, and the most classic is that of Duṣyanta painting a picture of Śakuntalā in Kālidāsa's (5th c.) *Abhijñāna Śakuntalam*. We will discuss this passage presently.

In his commentary on the *Kāmasūtra* Yaśodhara[7] enumerates the six essential elements of a painting as follows: *rūpabheda* (distinction of form), *pramāṇāṇi* (proportions), *bhāva* (mood or feeling), *lāvaṇya* (grace), *sādriśya* (likeness) and *varṇikābhaṅga* (colouring). Scholars have differed in their interpretations of this statement, but it does reflect the degree of intellectual sophistication with which the theoreticians discussed the aesthetic principles involved in painting. The *Citrasūtra* of the *Viṣṇudharmottara* states that of all the visual arts that of painting is the most popular and provides us with different reasons why people like painting. We are told that teachers emphasize the clarity and firmness of the line, while the connoisseurs prefer to judge the brushwork. Women are said to be attracted to a painting because of its decorative or ornamental qualities, whereas the average man admires bright or rich colours.[8] When all four elements are harmoniously combined in one painting, it is approved by everyone. It is interesting that there is no reference to the outline in Yaśodhara's verse when the *Citrasūtra* lays such emphasis upon drawing. In fact, elsewhere in the *Citrasūtra* we are informed that a painting is considered beautiful if it is drawn with clear, bold and unoblique lines.[9] A glance at the Nepali paintings will reveal how strongly linear the tradition is, an observation which is generally true of Indian paintings as well. Yaśodhara's omission of so fundamental an aspect of the art of painting, therefore, seems all the more curious. However, both *rūpabheda* and *sādriśya* can only be achieved through the outline, and possibly Yaśodhara found it unnecessary to emphasize it further.

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[6] See epigraph at the front of the book.

[7] A. K. Coomaraswamy, *The Transformation of Nature into Art*, p. 181.

[8] P. Shah, *Viṣṇudharmottara-Purāṇa, Third Khaṇḍa*, I, p. 145.

[9] *Ibid.*

Pramāṇa, or theory of proportions, always plays a profoundly significant role in religious arts, for the divine figures must reflect a consistency of form which cannot deviate according to the whimsy of the artist. We have remarked earlier how important canons of proportions were for Nepali religious paintings, and the texts constantly emphasize that an image which is not drawn according to the correct proportions is inauspicious. Equal emphasis is placed upon standard measurements for representing human beings and animals as well. The male bodies are classified into four basic types, such as *haṁsa*, *bhadra*, *mālavya*, *rucaka* and *śaśaka*.[10] Precise instructions are given for exact iconometric lineaments of each, and we are even provided with a sketchy description of the physical characteristics of the types. For example, a *haṁsa* type of male should have a beautiful face, honey coloured eyes, moon-white complexion, serpentine arms, a slim waist and a gait like that of a swan (*haṁsa*). Moreover, the *haṁsa* is recommended for representations of both gods and kings, and indeed we will note later how similarly idealized their depictions are. Portraits were rarely done from life but mostly from memory, and they had to conform to recognizable stereotypes or conceptualized ideals as is evident from several literary allusions. For instance, when Duṣyanta paints the absent Śakuntalā's picture he does so from memory and, although the picture is admired by his attendants, they can recognize her only from the context.[11] Or again, in the *Vikramacarita*[12] we are told that a king was so fond of his queen that he could not entertain the idea of being separated from her even momentarily. So he kept her at his side even as he executed matters of state. Questioning the propriety of such conduct the courtiers advised the king to install a portrait of her instead. An artist was summoned and allowed to see the queen briefly. He recognized at once that she was a "lotus lady" (*padminī*), one of the four types into which women are generally categorized in the śilpaśāstra and accordingly painted her portrait with the characteristic marks of a lotus lady (*padminī-lakṣaṇa-yuktā*). Yet the portrait was admired as a faithful representation of the queen and everyone marvelled at the likeness. It was more important that the queen should look like a queen and the portrait should reflect "queenly" qualities even if it did not reproduce the exact physical characteristics of the model.

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[10] *Idem*, pp. 127-128.

[11] C. R. Devadhar, *Dramas of Kalidasa*, Delhi-Varanasi-Patna, 1966, pp. 186-188.

[12] Coomaraswamy, *op. cit.*, pp. 32 ff.

This insistence upon the use of the conceptual rather than the visible image is also evident from the instructions given for depicting elements of nature. The *Citrasūtra* tells us that "the sky should be shown colourless and full of birds and the celestial dome should be shown with stars. Earth should be shown with forest regions and watery regions with their traits. A mountain should be shown with assemblages of rocks, peaks, minerals, trees, birds and beasts of prey. Water is to be represented with innumerable fish and tortoises, with lotus-eyed aquatic animals and with other qualities natural to water."[13] And so indeed are sky, mountain and water represented in Nepali painting, each natural element in its typical aspect. Looking at an eleventh century representation of water (Fig. 17) or a nineteenth century picture of mountains (Fig. 169), one might suppose that the artists had followed the above precepts verbatim. This is clear, too, from Duṣyanta's discussion of the unfinished picture of Śakuntalā. When the court jester asks him what remained to be added to the picture, Duṣyanta replies: "The stream of Malini ought to be drawn with a pair of swans resting on its sands; and on both its sides must appear the sacred hills at the base of the Himalayan ranges, where the deer are squatting; and I wish to draw, underneath a tree that bears some bark-garments suspended from its boughs, a doe that rubs her left eye on the horn of a black antelope."[14] It is well worth remarking that the forest scene depicted in an intriguing illumination (Fig. 173) reflects the same kind of conceptualization which characterizes the verbal description above. We even note a pair of black antelopes scratching each other below the plaintain tree.

"The forms of invisible entities have been described on the analogy of things found in the world. The representations of observable should be made as complete as possible because in painting exact likeness is most important."[15] Elsewhere in the *Citrasūtra* we are told that "that is (beautiful) painting, which looks as if breathing".[16] Other theoreticians are even more explicit. Someśvara in his *Mānasollāsa* defines a picture as successful if it is painted as if it were an image reflected in a mirror.[17] The same idea is echoed by Śrīkumāra in his *Śilparatna* when he states that a *citra* is that in which "the representation is like an image reflected in a mirror and not merely a sketch".[18] Someśvara clearly implies that a sketch, even if it is spontaneous, is not a proper work of art (*aviddha*), which may be one reason why unfinished sketches or drawings were not saved by the artists or admired by patrons. This is nevertheless surprising in a tradition which emphasized the paramountcy of the outline both in theory and in practice.

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[13] P. Shah, *op. cit.*, II, p. 133.

[14] Devadhar, *op. cit.*, p. 191.

[15] Shah, *op. cit.*, II, p. 132.

[16] *Idem*, p. 136.

[17] *Idem*, p. 124, n. 2. *sādṛśyam likhyate yattu darpaṇe pratibimbavat*

The assertion that exact likeness or the mirror image is the essential quality of a picture seems to be in direct contradiction to what we have discussed so far. It also carries the implication of a realistic pictorial tradition, whereas both the Indian and the Nepali artists have done precisely the opposite and have always avoided imitating nature exactly. For instance, the rocks and mountains both in Indian and Nepali paintings are charming creations of the artist's imagination and do not even pretend to imitate natural formations. In this sense Śrikumāra in his *Śilparatna* comes nearer the truth when he states that "whatever moveable or immoveable things are in this world, when represented according to their respective nature are to be called Citra".[19] It is interesting to note that the word used is "nature" rather than form viz. *svabhāva* rather than *svarūpa*.

V

That at least theoreticians were concerned with aesthetic response is clear from the inclusion of the terms *bhāva* and *lāvaṇya* among the six limbs of paintings. In his *Mānasollāsa* Someśvara describes a type of picture as *bhāvacitra* and defines it as that form of painting in which *rasa* such as *śṛṅgāra* is revealed to the viewer at a first glance and which creates wonder in his mind;[20] Śrīkumāra too defines *rasacitra* in a similar fashion.[21] It is obvious therefore that the term *bhāva*, a close English equivalent of which is feeling, is interchangeable with the broader term *rasa*, which is of fundamental importance in theories of poetics and literary criticism in India.

The importance of the *rasa* theory for painting is evident from the *Citrasūtra* which devotes almost an entire chapter to the subject.[22] A work of art is said to evoke or arouse a particular feeling, sentiment or *rasa* in the beholder. Nine basic

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[18] *Idem*, p. 125.
[19] *Ibid.*
[20] *Idem*, p. 124.
[21] *Idem*, p. 125.
[22] Shah, *op. cit.*, I, pp. 154-157.

rasas are enumerated as follows: *śṛṅgāra* (erotic), *hāsya* (comic), *karuṇā* (compassion), *raudra* (fury), *vīra* (heroic), *bhayānaka* (fearsome), *bibhatsa* (disgust), *adbhūta* (marvellous) and *śānta* (tranquillity). The author not only tells us how these feelings can be expressed in a picture, but also discusses which pictures are suitable for whom. It is clear that a particular *rasa* is evoked as much by the mode of delineation as by the subject matter. For instance, while beauty, melodious colours and grace in a picture are regarded as essential to arouse the *śṛṅgāra rasa*, we are told that *hāsyarasa* is evoked by "the depiction of that which is dwarf-like, hunch-backed or somewhat deformed in appearance with a hand contracted without purpose."[23]

Indeed, the theory of *citrarasa* was closely involved with the themes as is evident from the admonitions regarding the suitability of certain pictures expressing a particular *rasa* for a particular place. Since the depiction of a cremation ground or a place of execution can only evoke a feeling of disgust, such subjects should be avoided everywhere except in a royal assembly or a temple. Only those themes that inspire the comic, the erotic or the tranquil moods are recommended for the average home. In fact, the houses of the commoners in Nepal (Fig. 10) are invariably painted with religious images and symbols which arouse the *śāntarasa*, and even the royal palaces are decorated with icons and mythological stories of an edificatory nature. Moreover, as we will see later, when the artist did paint battle scenes on a scroll or a wall, the representation is hardly horrifying but often comical. When a scene of death is depicted, no sense of tragedy is expressed at all, and pathos is conveyed mostly through symbols and attitudes rather than facial expressions.

Postures and gestures are of fundamental importance to both Indian and Nepali painting; for instance, little attempt is made to convey anguish or agony in scenes of battle (Fig. 152), and postures alone are deemed sufficient to express a heroic feeling (*vīrarasa*). Similarly, anger or wrath is expressed either by a militant stance or by rolling eyes, while simply by the manner in which a lady sits (Fig. 155) she communicates her grief with remarkable poignancy. This is also apparent in the appreciation of Śakuntalā's portrait by the court jester, who exclaims: "How beautifully are the feelings represented in this lovely posture!"[24]

It is understandable therefore why the *Citrasūtra* states quite explicitly that an accomplished artist must acquire an adequate knowledge of *nṛtta*. The word *nṛtta* implies both dancing and dance-drama, and the close relationship between the arts of painting and drama will be apparent throughout this book. The *Citrasūtra* devotes an entire chapter to postures which form an important topic of discussion in other śilpaśāstras as well. Time and again it will become apparent that the stylized and almost measured attitudes of the figures in Nepali painting are copied directly from the variety of dramatic performance known as *yātrā*. The close relationship between dancing and both painting and sculpture is emphasized at the very beginning of the *Citrasūtra*, where we are told that the movements of the eyes, the expression of feelings as well as gestures and postures are common to both the visual and performing arts.

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[23] Shah, *op, cit.*, II, p. 135.

[24] Devadhar, *op. cit.*, p. 187. It is interesting to note that Duṣyanta thereafter states: I had to make certain modifications, particularly for those elements of form that cannot be painted in a picture. Nevertheless, I think I have somewhat succeeded in expressing her gracefulness (*lāvaṇya*) through the line (*rekhayā*).

Whether the artists were at all familiar with such theories of painting cannot be ascertained. Certainly during the period when the paintings discussed in this book were executed (11th-19th century), it is doubtful whether all painters were educated sufficiently to read the śilpaśāstras. Probably many of the precepts and instructions were handed down orally by masters to their pupils. It is difficult to believe that a painting such as the Cleveland Tārā (Fig. 71) did not elicit an aesthetic response from the patron or that an artist would be inspired to paint such a fine picture as the Los Angeles Śaiva shrine (Fig. 121) if his patron was indifferent. It must be remembered, nonetheless, that beauty was not considered to be an end in itself and that an image was regarded as beautiful when it adhered strictly to the prescribed canons. A religious painting, or for that matter a didactic picture, was not intended to be hung on a wall and admired simply for its formal qualities. While beautiful form was an essential desideratum for an image, its symbolic value was of far greater importance both to the patron and the priest.

VI

I have already stressed that for some curious reason dedicatory inscriptions were attached far more frequently to paintings than to sculpture. Although they provide us with names of the donors and members of their family, they rarely furnish us with artists' names. As in medieval Europe, the artists in Nepal too never signed their works, for anonymity was regarded as a virtue and was in conformity with the belief that all images were divine creations, the artist being only the instrument through which the divine artisan worked. Curiously, however, the patrons were apparently free to attach their names to paintings, just as scribes attached theirs' to the manuscripts they copied. The artist's reticence to sign his works is therefore all the more admirable.

The primary art historical significance of the dedicatory inscriptions lies in the fact that they provide us with precise dates when the paintings were executed. As we have also discussed, the inscriptions sometimes record other relevant information, such as the refurbishing or replacement of paintings, which too was considered an act of religious merit. At other times though, the inscriptions raise more problems than they solve.

The post-colophon statement in the *Aṣṭasāhasrikā-Prajñāpāramitā* manuscript in the Cleveland Museum of Art (Fig. 11) informs us that the manuscript was dedicated at the Vikramaśīla monastery in the year 1117 on the eighth day of the lunar half of the month of Āśvin by the pious Mahāyānist monk Āryaśrīmitra, who was from Nepal.[25] Apart from the fact that the day itself is one of the most important religious days for a Hindu, this is probably the only recorded instance of a Nepali monk consecrating a manuscript in an Indian monastery. That Āryaśrīmitra is the donor is certain but was he also the copyist? If so, did he copy the manuscript while in the Vikramaśīla monastery, or did he bring it with him as a gift when he visited the famous Indian monastery? What is certain is that both the script and the style of the illuminations are Nepali rather than Eastern Indian. As was the general practice one may assume that the manuscript was first copied and then illustrated. It also seems reasonably certain that the illuminations were completed prior to the day on which the manuscript was consecrated. In most post-colophon statements we are informed of the day when the scribe completed his task, but curiously in the Cleveland manuscript nothing is mentioned about the date when the actual writing was completed. If the manuscript had been written and illustrated in Nepal before it was brought to Vikramaśīla, then Āryaśrīmitra must have added the post-colophon statement when consecrating it on so specific a date. Since the palaeography of the text and the post-colophon statement is exactly the same, we must conclude that Āryaśrīmitra himself copied the manuscript. If he did so while in the Indian monastery then in view of the strongly Nepali style of the pictures, we must conclude that he also was responsible for the illuminations. If he was neither the copyist nor the illuminator, which is unlikely, then he must have brought it with him when he visited Vikramaśīla.

A second manuscript with a problematic post-colophon statement is that of the

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[25] *deya dharmoyaṁ pravara mahāyānāyayinaḥ śrīmannepāla deśiya bhikṣu āryaśrī-mitrasya yadatra* etc., etc., *samvat 300 3 7 aśvani śuklāṣṭamyāṁ/śrī vikramaśīlamahāvihāre | |*

Devīmāhātmya in the Newark Museum (Fig. 12). The colophon contains rather garbled information regarding events which took place during the reign of Yakṣamalla.[26] We are told that in the year 590 Manigal, which is an ancient name for Patan, was heavily fortified and Rāyamalla, the eldest son of Yakṣamalla, defied his father. On the sixth day of the bright fortnight of the month of Āśvin in the year 597, Yakṣamalla attacked Patan and on the following day the manuscript was completed by Ānandapāla. We are then told in an addendum that the book belonged to Raṇajitmalla, who ruled Bhadgaon between 1722 and 1769, and that the king was pleased to give it away to Ajitasiṁha. Thus, it would appear that the manuscript was originally written for Rāyamalla in N.S. 597 or A.D. 1477 who succeeded his father to the throne of Bhadgaon. The manuscript obviously remained in the palace until the eighteenth century when Raṇajitmalla, one of Rāyamalla's descendents, donated it to Ajitasiṁha.

However, the problem really is not that simple for the addendum informing us about Raṇajitmalla's gift is written in the same hand as the larger post-colophon statement concerning Rāyamalla's commission. Moreover, the palaeography of the manuscript itself seems to belong neither to the fifteenth nor to the eighteenth century. Rather, even a cursory comparison with the script in the 1594 *Hitopadeśa* manuscript (Fig. 176) will reveal that palaeographically both scripts are extremely close. The style of the illuminations too seems to suggest the late sixteenth or early seventeenth rather than the fifteenth century. It is thus possible that there was an original *Devīmāhātmya* manuscript in the Bhadgaon palace archives, which was written in the fifteenth century for Rāyamalla in Patan. Perhaps, because it was damaged, a copy was made some time towards the end of the sixteenth century and the post-colophon statement copied verbatim. Finally, this manuscript was given by Raṇajitmalla to Ajitasiṁha in the eighteenth century at which time an addendum was added by a scribe who carefully imitated the earlier style of writing. Otherwise, we will have to assume that the present manuscript is an eighteenth century copy of the earlier manuscript and that the scribe also imitated the earlier script.

Similar doubts may be also raised about the two earliest and illuminated manuscripts from Nepal. Both are well-known and profusely illustrated and are now in the libraries of the Cambridge University and the Asiatic Society, Calcutta.[27]

[26] Mr. Gautam Vajracharya and I have read the colophon carefully, but unfortunately cannot explain all the seeming contradictions. It is hoped that Mr. Vajracharya will in the near future publish this colophon, for it contains hitherto unknown facts regarding Yakṣamalla's reign and his relations with his son, Rāyamalla.

[27] For a detailed discussion of these two manuscripts see A. Foucher, *Étude sur l'iconographie bouddhique de l'Inde.*

The Cambridge manuscript (Figs. 13-17) was written in A.D. 1015 and the Calcutta manuscript (Figs. 18-20) in A.D. 1071. In both the pictures are labelled, but the script of the labels is distinctly different from that of the texts. As a matter of fact, although the texts show two different styles of handwriting, the labels in both manuscripts are remarkably similar and seem to have been written in the Bhujimo script of about the thirteenth century.[28] Moreover, while the pictures in the Calcutta manuscript and covers are rendered in a similar style, there is a recognizable stylistic difference between the illuminations in the text and those on the covers of the Cambridge manuscript. The latter conform to the pictures in the Calcutta manuscript, while those in the Cambridge text relate more closely to thirteenth or fourteenth century illuminations. A detailed discussion and a solution of these problems are beyond the scope of this book, but what can be stated with certainty is that two different artists must have been responsible for the covers and the textual illuminations of the Cambridge manuscript. For the present, we will assume that the covers were probably painted when the manuscript was written, but the illuminations in the text may have been rendered at a later date.

It cannot always be assumed that the covers of a manuscript are the originals which were provided at the time the manuscript was consecrated. In some instances the stylistic correspondences are so close that they seem certainly to belong together. For example, there seems no question that the artist responsible for the Cleveland manuscript illuminations (Fig. 11) also painted the covers. On the other hand, we are less certain whether the covers, said to belong to a *Prajñāpāramitā* manuscript of 1054 (Fig. 22) were, in fact, painted in that year. The same question may be raised about another dated manuscript (Fig. 60) the covers of which are probably later replacements. Due to frequent usage the covers were more likely to deteriorate faster and hence they would be replaced from time to time. Thus, one has to examine the illuminations carefully in each instance to determine whether the covers of a given manuscript were painted at the time the text was written, and not assume *ipso facto* that they are always contemporaneous.

Few such problems arise with the paubhās where generally the information in the inscription is fairly accurate. However, mistakes do occur in the numerals for dates,

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[28] It is generally believed that the Bhujimo script did not develop until the thirteenth century. However, if the labels were in fact written in the eleventh century by the scribe responsible for the text, then the difference in the scripts may indicate the difference between good calligraphy and a more freehand style.

रवि शाक्य

as for instance in the Leiden Amoghapāśa paubhā[29] or the Los Angeles Vasudhārāmandala (Fig. 97). An error in the writing of the numerals has led scholars to date the Leiden painting to 1436 and yet the king mentioned further along in the inscription is known to have ruled Bhadgaon from 1519 until 1547. The king's name is Prāṇamalla, and the paubhā was dedicated and evidently painted in the town of Purṇamatī or modern Panauti. In the case of the Los Angeles Vasudhārāmandala too, the given date does not correspond with the dates of the ruling monarch also mentioned in the inscription. Such examples are rare, however, and generally the inscriptions are quite reliable.

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[29] This painting has been frequently published (Kramrisch, *The Art of Nepal*, fig. 82) as an example of a dated paubhā. My own dating of another example (Pal, *Nepal/Where the Gods are Young*, p. 37, fig. 18) must also be revised accordingly.

CHAPTER THREE

MANUSCRIPT ILLUMINATIONS

I

The earliest examples of Nepali painting consist of manuscript illuminations. All early manuscripts from Nepal, as from Eastern India, are written on palm leaves. Since palm leaves are not native to the Kathmandu Valley, it may be surmised that the tradition was introduced from Eastern India. While all surviving early illuminated manuscripts from Eastern India are Buddhist, in Nepal both Buddhist and Hindu manuscripts were preserved, although the former far outnumber the latter.

The earliest palm leaf manuscript in Nepal is as old as the seventh century, but no illuminated manuscript goes back beyond the eleventh. These manuscripts invariably consist of narrow strips of palm leaves, sometimes as long as twelve inches but rarely wider than three, loosely held together by means of strings and protected by wooden boards. Often these wooden covers, a large number of which has fortunately survived, are even more lavishly painted than the manuscripts themselves. When paper began to replace palm leaf after the thirteenth century, it did not substantially alter the shape of the manuscripts. Usually a small panel in the centre of the folio is devoted to illumination, but at times as many as three compositions may be accommodated on one folio. Occasionally the ends of the folios are also provided with narrow bands decorated with floral or geometric designs. The average size of an illumination is generally no larger than two inches square, and yet often the compositions appear to be deceptively monumental.

Whether Buddhist or Hindu, mostly the manuscripts are illuminated with hieratic images of gods and goddesses. Sometimes the manuscript itself was left unadorned, but the covers were sumptuously painted with representations of divinities. Even when the text is predominantly narrative and hence ideally suited for illustration, only the covers are adorned with schematic icons which are not always relevant to the text. For example, but for one or two exceptions, there is no direct relationship between the illuminations in a *Prajñāpāramitā* manuscript and the text itself. Or again, although the *Śivadharma Purāṇa* and the *Viṣṇudharma Purāṇa* are texts rich in mythological stories, their covers only are illuminated with formal representations of conventional images of Śiva and Viṣṇu. While in some instances the pictures are illustrative, generally they seem to have been added purely for edification. Since the manuscripts themselves were worshipped directly as if they were images, it was only logical to beautify them with figures of deities and thereby further augment the sanctity of the books. At the same time, by their sheer presence the images would protect the manuscripts from both natural and supernatural evils and misfortunes; hence, even when the text itself was left unadorned, the covers were often provided with divine representations.

It has already been stressed in the previous chapter that religious differences among the patrons had little or no effect upon the styles of painting. Thus, whether the manuscripts were Buddhist or Hindu, just as they were written in the same style of script, so also were they illuminated in the same basic style of painting. However, as will be evident from the subsequent discussion, the themes often determined the elaborateness of the compositions or the dramatic expression of the style. Thus, the subject matter of the *Devīmāhātmya*, which is concerned with battles between the goddess Durgā and the *asuras* or anti-heroes, inspired more dynamic and spirited illuminations (Figs. 55-58) than those of the *Gaṇḍavyūha* (Fig. 34), which have a more gentle and serene expression concerned as the text is with the wanderings of the young Sudhana. Since the manuscripts were repeatedly copied, one may expect that the illuminations would also tend to be repetitive. This is however not the case, and, just as the palaeography differs notably from one scribe to another, the styles of illumination too vary significantly, as we shall see presently.

Manuscripts continued to be copied well into the twentieth century, for the act of donating a book to a monastery or a brahman is considered meritorious by both Buddhists and Hindus. We shall mostly concentrate, however, upon manuscripts copied and illuminated between the eleventh and the fourteenth centuries when the tradition was vital and creative. After the fourteenth century, while one does come across an occasional manuscript with noteworthy or even exciting illuminations, generally the interest in manuscripts seems to have declined with a consequent loss in the quality of the illuminations. Besides, from the fourteenth century onwards we have a large amount of other types of pictures which give us a far better idea of the history of Nepali painting than the diminutive manuscript illuminations. Although both Buddhist and Hindu manuscripts were illuminated in the same basic style, I have elsewhere qualified the style as Monastic—and will continue to do so in this book—simply because the majority of the manuscripts are Buddhist and were written and dedicated in monasteries. However, the term must be accepted merely as one of convenience and by no means as descriptive of the characteristics of the style. Indeed, nothing of the severe austerity and puritanical attitude which the word "monastic" conjures up is evident in the style. Like the writing itself, the style is elegant and disciplined, but in no way does it reflect the cold, dry and moralistic atmosphere associated with a monastery. Rather, it exudes the same delightfully assertive qualities of life which are also characteristic of the vivacious and sensuously appealing murals of the excavated monasteries of Ajanta in India.

Buddhist Manuscript Illuminations

II

Numerous Buddhist texts were written and copied over the centuries, but only a limited number were illuminated. Among these the *Prajñāpāramitāsūtra* and the *Pañcarakṣāsūtra* were by far the most popular, but it would be wrong to presume that all manuscripts of these two texts were illuminated. Frequently also the paintings were restricted only to the covers of the manuscripts. Apart from these two texts, there appears to have been no consistent rule as to which manuscripts were to be illuminated. After the fourteenth century one finds an occasional manuscript of the *Dhāraṇīsaṁgraha*, a collection of prayers and charms, or of the *Kāraṇḍavyūha*, a text eulogizing the Bodhisattva Avalokiteśvara, illustrated with hieratic divinities in rather a stereotyped manner and displaying no creative artistic impulse.

A perusal of several illustrated *Prajñāpāramitā* manuscripts reveals no particular or uniform iconographic programme for the illuminations. The Cleveland manuscript of the early twelfth century (Fig. 11) may be cited as a typical example of an early Nepali *Prajñāpāramitā* with illuminations. A few of the folios are enlivened with representations of several Mahāyāna divitities, there being three on a folio. One of these, of course, portrays the goddess Prajñāpāramitā, while the others depict Bodhisattvas and the Buddha. The covers are decorated with iconic representations of the five transcendental Tathāgatas, the Bodhisattva Vajrasattva and eight other Bodhisattvas, two of whom attend the central Tathāgata Vairocana on one cover, while six others accompany Vajrasattva on the second. If we look at several other sets of covers, however, it will at once become clear that there was no consistent tradition regarding the themes which were employed to illuminate the manuscripts. Some are given altogether to illustrating scenes from the life of the Buddha (Fig. 22), and others, in addition, use hieratic representations of divinities (Figs. 21, 23).

Whether such variations in the iconographic programmes reflect theological differences or are due to personal preferences of the artists is difficult to determine.

Usually the divinities are represented in a formal manner, either as seated or standing frontally. If and when they are accompanied by acolytes, the latter are portrayed smaller in size, no doubt to emphasize the primacy of the principal deity. Generally the figures are set off against oval aureoles which are sometimes left plain but occasionally adorned with flame motifs. More elaborate compositions may be witnessed in two *Prajñāpāramitā* manuscripts now preserved in the libraries of Cambridge University and the Asiatic Society, Calcutta (Figs. 13-20). The Cambridge manuscript was written at the Hlaṁ vihāra, a monastery which has not been identified to date, in the year N.S. 135 corresponding to A.D. 1015. The monastery where the Calcutta manuscript was copied is not known, but it was completed in the year N.S. 191, corresponding to A.D. 1071. In contrast to other *Prajñāpāramitā* manuscripts both are profusely illuminated, and what is of greater interest is that the pictures in both are provided with identifying labels. The two manuscripts are, therefore, indispensable for students of Buddhist religion and iconography.

It is rather curious that only these two manuscripts of the *Prajñāpāramitā* bear such identification labels and most of the deities represented appear to have been specially venerated in different parts of India. Although some of these divinities are also depicted in other *Prajñāpāramitā* manuscripts, in the Cambridge and Calcutta manuscripts they have a greater historical significance in that they are associated with specific religious shrines in Nepal, India, Indonesia and even China. For example, two of the Bodhisattvas illustrated here are said to be representations of Lokanātha venerated on Kapoṭa hill in Magadha and Samantabhadra worshipped in Mahācīna[1] (Figs. 14, 15). It seems improbable that the artist was personally familiar with the actual shrines or their images, but we cannot also determine whether he had visual models to work from, for no Indian manuscript of an earlier date illustrates such a variety of divinities or shrines associated with specific localities.

Interesting as the pictures in these two manuscripts are, it will not be possible to discuss or reproduce more than a few.[2] Apart from divine images both manuscripts illustrate the principal events from the life of the Buddha. In some instances the figures are set off against aureoles of bright contrasting colours and in others

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Many of the subjects are repeated in both manuscripts, but they are rendered in distinct styles and one wonders if one artist was familiar with the other's handiwork. Generally, the illuminations in the Cambridge manuscript are freely drawn with somewhat clipped and cursive lines; in the Calcutta manuscript the outlines are more surely and elegantly drawn, reflecting the same assertive qualities seen in most other early manuscripts (Figs, 11, 25). Because of the more freehand drawing, the figures in the Cambridge manuscript are not always carefully proportioned or fully modelled, but the compositions are usually more animated. The Cambridge artist reveals a strong penchant for architectural motifs as well as rocks and trees which dominate many of his compositions (Figs. 14, 15); but in the Calcutta manuscript these elements are employed with greater restraint. Indeed, the difference between the two styles becomes vivid if we compare two representations of the same subject (Figs. 17-18). The labels in both cases inform us that the Tathāgata Abhayapāṇi is engaged in protecting travellers on the ocean. While both artists used the same artistic vocabulary, the two expressions are strikingly different. The ocean is rendered conceptually in both; but whereas in the Cambridge manuscript the artist has depicted the turbulent waters by highlighting the waves with touches of white, the illuminator of the Calcutta manuscript has preferred to paint swirling masses of water which create a whirlpool effect. Both emphasize the nature of water by including two types of boats and aquatic animals; but while the Calcutta painter has drawn a pair of fish almost as an abstract design, in the other we encounter not only fish, but also a winged seahorse, makaras as well as amusingly rendered seashells. The adoring figure to the Buddha's left in the Calcutta illumination is enveloped in an exuberant scroll design, but he is hardly as forbidding as the Bhairava-like head which emerges from the ocean in the Cambridge manuscript. Possibly this figure represents the demonic spirit of the stormy sea, and his disposition in the Calcutta illumination reflects his submission to the miraculous powers of the Tathāgata Abhayapāṇi. Perceptibly different also are the two figures of the Tathāgaṭa both in terms of their proportions and modelling.

Thus, it is evident from the above comparison that, despite their basic iconographic similarities, the two representations are notably different. We have already discussed the possibility that the illuminations in the Cambridge manuscript may not have been rendered at the time the text was written. While the pictures in the Calcutta manuscript are painted fundamentally in the same style as others of about the same period, those in the Cambridge manuscript reveal qualities and mannerisms which are closer in fact to fourteenth century works, such as the Bharat Kala Bhavan *Devīmāhātmya* or the 1367 *Prajñāpāramitā* manuscript (Figs. 28, 29, 55-58). As we have suggested earlier, the Cambridge illuminations may have been added at a later date, possibly the thirteenth century. Otherwise we must assume that the artist was a strong individualist, as was the illuminator responsible for a pair of covers which once protected a *Prajñāpāramitā* manuscript written in A.D. 1054 (Fig. 22).

Among the illuminated manuscripts or covers of the eleventh or twelfth century, those which reflect a uniform style are a pair of covers said to belong to a manuscript dated 1028 now in the Neotia collection (Fig. 21); the Calcutta manuscript of 1071; a pair of covers in the Swali collection (Figs. 23-24); the Cleveland manuscript of 1117 (Fig. 11); and the Binney manuscript and covers (Fig. 25). If indeed the covers of the Neotia manuscript were painted in 1028, then the Swali covers must also have been rendered at the same time. But a comparison of these two covers with the Binney and Cleveland manuscripts clearly reveal that they are all executed in the same basic style. It should be remembered that we are dealing here with a particularly conservative tradition; and even as late as 1367 (Figs. 28-29) an artist was painting in the earlier manner without significant stylistic changes.

III

The basic characteristics of the style may best be defined by a comparison with contemporary illuminations from Eastern India with which they share some features. At the same time, we will note how perceptively different the Nepali illuminations are both in terms of content as well as delineation.

[Between the years 1000 and 1300 manuscripts were also illustrated in the Buddhist monasteries of Eastern India. A number of these have survived, and they clearly indicate that the Indian and the Nepali styles of illuminations belong essentially to the same fundamental tradition] (Figs. 30-31). In Eastern India too the principal manuscripts illuminated were those of the *Aṣṭasāhasrikā-Prajñāpāramitā* and the *Pañcarakṣā*. Generally, however, the Eastern Indian manuscripts are more modestly adorned than the Nepali examples, and none can quite match the richness of either the Cambridge or the Calcutta *Prajñāpāramitā* manuscripts. Moreover, in Nepal other texts such as the *Gaṇḍavyūha* and the *Kāraṇḍavyūha* were frequently illustrated, and the covers also are painted with a far wider repertoire of narrative themes than those from Eastern India.

A primary difference between the two schools of painting is perceptible in the tonality of the colours. Because the pigments are prepared with different ingredients in the two areas, the colours differ considerably both in the intensity of their brightness as well as in their texture. The reds in the Eastern Indian manuscripts tend to be brighter and more like vermillion, while in the Nepali manuscripts the reds are deeper and posses a crimson tinge. Similarly, the yellow has a stronger tonality in the Eastern Indian manuscripts as compared to the softer hue preferred by the Nepali artists. On the whole, the palette of the Nepali artists betrays a richer variety than that of their Indian counterparts. Mauves, purples and pinks are applied more liberally in Nepali manuscripts—particularly to delineate the cube-like rocks, architectural details and sometimes the garments—than in those produced in Eastern India.

The draftsmanship too is recognizably different in the illuminations from the two areas. Like the script, the drawing in Eastern Indian pictures (Figs. 30-31) is bold and vivacious, but in the Nepali illuminations the carefully drawn outline is informed with greater delicacy. As a result the Eastern Indian figures appear more spirited and energized, whereas the Nepali figures are more gentle and almost fragile. Perhaps because of the cursive quality of the drawing, the Eastern Indian figures tend to reveal coarser features, particularly in the shapes of the faces, the sharp angularity of the chins and the jutting edges of the elbows and other joints of the limbs. The Nepali figures are soft and pliant with round faces distinguished by delicate features. Indeed, the figurative types are remarkably different in the two styles; those in Eastern Indian illuminations conform more closely to the form seen in contemporary Pāla sculptures, but the Nepali artists obviously preferred to delineate their figures according to their own aesthetic norms. There are other differences as well, such as in the manner of shading, the textile patterns, and architectural designs, which make it fairly easy to distinguish the Nepali school from that of Eastern India. At least one element never occurs in Eastern Indian illuminations, the vivaciously painted rocks with their cube-like shapes, which were employed by the Nepali artists with such obvious exuberance.

Despite such differences, the illuminators in both areas exhibit a like penchant for red as the basic colour for the background. The figures often sway with equally unnatural stances in illuminations from both regions, and the frontal representation of the body, with the faces in three quarter profile, is common to both schools. The artists of both areas preferred a somewhat flat and two-dimensional representation which emphasized the symbolic value of motifs and colours and aimed generally at graphic clarity of expression. Within a given composition the size of the figures is determined not according to laws of optical veracity but according to their functional importance, although this is emphasized to a far greater extent by the Eastern Indian artists than their counterparts in Nepal. Even in the narrative scenes, the compositions are governed by the symbolic and illustrative demands of the theme than by painterly considerations.

There is no gainsaying the fact that the tradition of writing on palm leaves must have been introduced into Nepal from Eastern India. The script too is similar in both areas, but it must be remembered that the Brāhmī script was introduced into Nepal at least as early as the fifth century, if not earlier. The Newari script of the eleventh century in fact evolved directly from that which was used in Licchavi inscriptions. Similarly, we know that wall paintings were familiar in the valley at least as early as the mid-fifth century, and there is no reason to believe that the Monastic style of painting, as evidenced in eleventh century illuminations, did not derive directly from earlier murals which adorned the monasteries and temples of Licchavi Nepal and elicited the admiration of the Chinese ambassador Wang Hsüan-tse in the seventh century. It would hardly be far-fetched to assume that such wall-paintings were executed in the same style as one encounters in the Buddhist caves at Ajanta. Thus, the Gupta tradition must have been the common source, and its residual legacy, with notably different expressions, is visible in the manuscript illuminations of both Eastern India and Nepal. The memory of the classical Indian style seems to have lingered on for a longer time in Nepal, for such compositions as that of Mahāśrī Tārā in the Calcutta manuscript (Fig. 19), the representation of the Vessantara Jātaka (Fig. 32), and of Māravijaya on the Swali cover (Fig. 40) clearly echo the pictorial organization and elegant expression of the luminous murals of Ajanta and some of the Central Asian monasteries.

IV

In contrast to the great variety of hieratic images, the repertoire of narrative subjects in *Prajñāpāramitā* manuscripts is rather limited. The most frequently represented are incidents from the life of the Buddha, eight of which had become conventionalized for artistic rendering before the Gupta period in India.[3] Not only did these eight incidents, known as the eight miracles, remain popular with Nepali illuminators, but they continued to employ the same iconographic formulae which were stereotyped in India centuries ago. Generally the scenes are represented on the manuscript covers, but occasionally they are included in the folios themselves. These eight incidents are: the birth of the Buddha at Lumbini; his enlightenment at Bodhgaya; preaching of the first sermon at Sarnath; his descent at Sāṅkāsya from the Tuṣita heaven where he had gone to preach to his mother; the occasion when he quieted the mad elephant Nalagiri at Rajagṛha (modern Rajgir); the incident at Vaiśāli when a monkey offered him honey; the great miracle at Śrāvastī where the Buddha multiplied himself in order to discredit other miracle performing ascetics; and, finally, his death at Kuśinagara.

It will not be possible here to discuss the various representations of the eight miracles at length. Usually, the depiction is synoptic in the traditional Indian manner, and the basic formula remains unaltered from one representation to another. There is total disregard for temporal sequence even within a single composition; for instance, in the portrayal of the nativity (Figs. 13, 21, 24) three separate incidents—the birth, the first bath and the seven steps—are shown together. Another invariable convention is that the Buddha is depicted larger than the others so that his prominence in the composition is assured. The emphasis always lies on graphic clarity rather than on dramatic expression, for familiarity of the imagery was essential for the perpetuation of the tradition. Nevertheless, there are significant variations from one representation to another as may be seen from a comparison of the nativity scene on two of the covers (Figs. 21, 24). While the figures of Māyā are identical in both, her sister Mahāprajāpati is rendered differently. The illuminator of the Swali cover has altogether omitted the baby emerging from the right hip; the other artist has not only added the boy, but he has also curiously framed the figure with the vertical section of a shrine even as he is being born. Obviously the painter wanted to make sure that his viewers would realize the divine nature of the birth. Furthermore, as the child stands on a pyramid of four lotuses to announce his universal sovereignty, a divine figure appears in the clouds and bathes the new born infant by pouring water from a vase. This incident has been dispensed with altogether by the artist of the Swali covers. The seven lotuses are arranged differently in the two compositions, and a second tree is added behind the gods on the Swali cover. While the three gods sway almost in an identical fashion and are similarly modelled on both covers, the second figure in the Swali cover is that of Viṣṇu rather than of Indra.

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[3] See J. Williams, "Sarnath Gupta Steles of the Buddha's Life" in *Ars Orientalis* X (1975), pp. 171 ff.

The representation of the nativity on a cover in Los Angeles (Fig. 22) shows even further variations. A fully grown Buddha, with no pretensions of being an infant, emerges from the left instead of the right hip of Māyā, thus deviating significantly from the textual account. He then stands upon a pyramid of seven lotuses and is attended by Indra and the multi-headed Brahmā. Curiously, while Indra carries a fish, Brahmā seems to hold a basket, perhaps filled with rice or sweets. Both fish and rice (or sweets) are still used as auspicious symbols on ceremonial occasions in parts of India, especially Bengal, and probably both items were regarded as such in Nepal as well. Thus, we are confronted here with the strange situation in which an unnatural birth is combined realistically with a social ceremony which the artist may well have witnessed in his own home.

One of the most elaborate and dramatic renderings of the Buddha's enlightenment occurs on one of the Swali covers (Fig. 23). The impassive Buddha seems completely undisturbed as he sits on his throne below the stylized Bodhi tree, while two of Māra's attendants make a vain attempt to overthrow the throne. In the foreground, on the Buddha's right, Māra, who is none other than Kāma, the god of desire, strikes a graceful pose as he shoots an arrow at the Master. In front of him one of his sensually beautiful daughters makes a futile attempt to distract Śākyamuni's concentration. Finally, having failed in his efforts a dejected Māra, his daughter and other companions are shown again on the left of the Buddha. Their attitudes leave us in no doubt about their mood, which is one of defeat and despair. Equally dramatic are other companions of Māra, with ugly faces and vicious grins, who attack the Buddha from the clouds with a variety of rocks and weapons. Although the composition is dominated by symmetrical arrangement of the figures, it is characterized by an expressive power and vitality which makes it the finest representation of the theme among the early manuscript illuminations. By comparison other depictions of the subject (Figs. 21, 22) appear more formal and simply illustrative. Surrounded by the hosts of Māra, Śākyamuni must have cut a very solitary figure as he sat below the Bodhi tree, and the unknown artist of the Swali cover seems to have had this in mind when he isolated the figure of the Buddha in so prominent a fashion. Indeed, he has arranged his figures with admirable restraint and clarity and has infused the composition with an unusual sense of high drama.

Although not as dramatic as the representations on the Swali covers, these on the Los Angeles covers (Fig. 22) are no less vivacious. Not only do they reflect several unusual iconographic features and narrative elements, but stylistically too the covers stand apart from the others. Among the principal iconographic differences the most noteworthy is the juxtaposition of the first sermon and the Nāga Mucalinda incident in one composition. The uniqueness of the nativity iconography has already been noted; mention may also be made of the hurtling creatures in the composition depicting the great miracle of Śrāvasti. They must represent the incredulous citizens of the city who were overwhelmed by the multitude of effulgent Buddhas appearing in the sky.

The above discussion makes it clear how, despite the demands of stringent iconographic traditions, the artist did deviate considerably, occasionally perhaps because of his unfamiliarity with a subject, but more frequently to display his artistic virtuosity. Apart from obvious iconographic differences, there are also subtle variations of style from one cover to another. For example, while the covers of the Neotia (Fig. 21) and Swali manuscripts (Figs. 23-24) are rendered in the same basic style, the incidents are depicted in a decorative and formal manner in the former, but with remarkable power of expression in the latter. The Los Angeles covers reflect an altogether different style, not only in terms of the drawing and the figurative types, but also in displaying a strongly idiosyncratic impulse. One experiences both a sense of humour and whimsy as one watches a fully grown Buddha emerge from his mother's right hip, or the playfullness of Māra's followers as they attack Śākyamuni, or again in the scattering of the residents of Śrāvasti. The offering of fish and rice by the gods at the birth adds a realistic touch; and even as the artist continued to use the same basic formulae, which were obviously regarded as immutable, his compositions are unusually elaborate and innovative. He certainly does show a greater awareness of the psychological nuances of some of the incidents rather than follow the established conventions timidly.

V

Other than the principal events from the life of the Buddha, few narrative subjects are represented in early Buddhist manuscripts. A chance survival is a manuscript cover now in the National Museum, New Delhi (Figs. 32, 33) depicting parts of the well known Vessantara Jātaka. This Jātaka was of abiding interest to Buddhists and was frequently represented in murals in India and elsewhere. Briefly the story is as follows: Vessantara was the son of a king and was famous for his philanthropic nature. His generosity led him to give away a white elephant, regarded as propitious for bringing rains, to the neighbouring kingdom of Kaliṅga which was suffering from a severe draught. As a result, a draught overtook Vessantara's own kingdom, and bowing to public pressure, his father was forced to banish him with his family. Undaunted by his misfortunes Vessantara gave away the chariot, the animals, and even his wife. Subsequently, his children were kidnapped, but ultimately they were all reunited and returned to their kingdom.

The manuscript cover portrays first Vessantara's gift of the white elephant to the messenger from Kaliṅga and then the departure of the prince and his family. The figures are remarkably similar to those seen on other early covers (Figs. 21, 23) and reveal the same preference for delicate forms and extravagantly swaying postures. Especially endearing is the representation of Vessantara leading his elephant, the gesture poignantly conveying the love and empathy between the animal and its master. Although the artist introduces no new colours, the red background is not quite as overwhelming and offers a pleasant contrast for the blue, green and yellow rock formations, the green horses and the white elephant. Indeed, both in the brilliance and harmony of colours as well as the painterly quality of the composition, this illustration of the Vessantara Jātaka remains one of the most delightful examples of early Nepali painting.

An illuminated manuscript, now dispersed among various museums in the United States, contains some of the most charming representations of narrative subjects (Figs. 34-36). When first published, it was identified as the *Kāraṇḍavyūha* but, undoubtedly, the manuscript is of the *Gaṇḍavyūha*,[4] which is a Mahāyāna text extolling the merits of the Bodhisattva doctrine through the experiences of a young merchant named Sudhana. The text weaves together philosophical discourses with accounts of Sudhana's pilgrimage and journeys to various teachers, monks, Bodhisattvas and deities, until he receives his final instructions from the Bodhisattva Samantabhadra. Curiously no other manuscript of the *Gaṇḍavyūha* from the Indian subcontinent is so profusely illuminated,[5] although it seems to have enjoyed greater popularity with artists in other parts of Buddhist Asia.

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[4] First published by Kramrisch (*Art of Nepal*, p. 100) as *Guṇakāraṇḍavyūha* (?) and from Eastern India. Sherman Lee (*A History of Far Eastern Art*, [Englewood Cliffs and New York, n.d.], colorplate 9) published several other folios and also wrongly attributed the manuscript to Eastern India while correctly identifying the subject as *Gaṇḍavyūha*. See also my discussion in J. Rosenfield (ed.), *The Arts of India and Nepal*, p. 105. Subsequently, two more folios were published in the catalogue of the Seattle Art Museum (H. Trubner, et al., *Asiatic Art in the Seattle Art Museum* [Seattle, 1973], p. 113), where the manuscript is mistakenly said to be of the *Prajñāpāramitā* and from Bengal.

Despite the striking simplicity of the compositions these illustrations are remarkably lively and entertaining. In many instances only one figure is portrayed either seated or standing and in conversation with an animal or a bird. Sometimes a tree or two, or the typical colourful rocks, are added to the composition to indicate an outdoor scene. In one instance we see a Bodhisattva talking with a parrot, in another two boys seem to be looking for something, in a third a figure turns round to converse with a deer. Whether the figure is of Sudhana or of a divine being, it is always an embodiment of melting physical grace which is emphasized by the swaying postures. Equally engaging are the animals and birds rendered with great economy of form but with astonishing expressiveness. In a particularly animated composition (Fig. 36) an elfish youth with bow and arrow is shown dancing joyfully on rocks. The figure represents an unusually spirited portrayal of Kāma, the god of love.

The background of the paintings is rendered in either red or blue. Against this monochromatic, flat surface the figures achieve a remarkable sense of bouyancy and seem almost to float through the air. The definition of the form is always crisp and the drawing firm and sure. Although there is very little shading, it is astonishing how the forms are given strong relief simply through linear definition. In one of the compositions the background is filled with tiny dots creating a pointillist effect.[6] There is a strong possibility that the dots are meant to indicate rain, for similar miniscule dots are also employed in a representation of the Buddha being anointed with water by two elephants in the Calcutta manuscript (Fig. 20). Altogether these charming illuminations have a distinct lyrical quality and are among the most animated examples of miniature painting in Nepal.

It has already been stressed that the *Prajñāpāramitā* manuscripts and their covers are illuminated with either the principal events from the life of the Buddha or with hieratic representations of Vajrayāna deities which bear little or no relation to the text. However, there are a few exceptions in which the artist attempted to illustrate the text. In a manuscript dated A.D. 1148 (Fig. 26) there are only four illuminations, three of which show enthroned Bodhisattvas engaged in expounding the doctrine to a congregation represented by two or three figures. In the composition illustrated here we see a curious manner of depicting the throne back with the figure seated in three-quarter profile; rather a perfunctory attempt to indicate that he is actually facing his congregation.

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[5] A detail from a manuscript cover has been published as depicting a scene from the *Gaṇḍavyūha*, but I have not succeeded in tracing the whereabouts of this manuscript. See, R. C. Majumdar (ed.), *The History and Culture of the Indian People*, V, Pl. LX, Fig. 136. Irrespective of whether the illumination is of the *Gaṇḍavyūha* or not, it is rendered in the finest Nepali tradition and reveals the artist's deft handling of the figures.

[6] Kramrisch, *op. cit.*, p. 100.

A more profusely illuminated manuscript, written on paper, is now in the Indian Museum, Calcutta. Dedicated in 1367, the same year when the beautiful Vasudhārā-mandala (Fig. 72) was consecrated, the illustrations (Figs. 28, 29) offer us some of the more elaborate compositions attempted by Nepali illuminators. Generally the paintings follow a stereotyped pattern since the subject matter always is that of the Buddha preaching to a congregation. Sometimes he is shown seated en face on a throne below a tree with as many as eight or ten figures distributed on either side. In other instances we see him at one end seated frontally but his head turned towards the audience which frequently includes Śakra or Indra, one of the chief interlocutors in the text. When thus represented he is invariably framed with only a section of the shrine as we encountered in the earlier illumination (Fig. 26). In addition, the artist has included an inset figure of the goddess Prajñāpāramitā, with or without a stupa, so that we are left in no doubt that the Buddha is engaged in preaching the *Prajñāpāramitāsūtra*. Usually the goddess is represented as floating in the sky and seated on a lotus. It is obvious, therefore, that at least one or two artists attempted to illustrate the text, but since the *sūtra* is mostly concerned with discussions of abstract philosophy, they had little choice but to use a stereotyped formula repeatedly.

A text which has always remained popular with Buddhists, and particularly with lay followers, is the *Pañcarakṣā*. The text of the *Pañcarakṣā* consists of five protective charms or spells, each presided over by a female divinity who is really the personification of that specific charm. Thus, the spell known as *Mahāmāyūrī* was devised to save people from snakebite, while another was formulated to prevent the occurence of smallpox. As the Buddhists were particularly fond of personifying their texts, each charm was conceived as a goddess and given a physical form. It may be mentioned that by the very same process the concept of *prajñapāramitā* was deified into the goddess of the same name.

The *Pañcarakṣā* manuscript is preserved like a Bible in every devout Buddhist household. Unlike the *Prajñāpāramitā* manuscripts, however, those of the *Pañcarakṣā* were less sumptuously illuminated. The illustrations (Fig. 25) mostly consist of hieratic representations of the five goddesses, sometimes along with those of the five Tathāgatas. Perhaps the most outstanding paintings occur in a manuscript now divided between the Los Angeles County Museum of Art and a private collection. Because the manuscript is of paper, the illustrations (Fig. 27) on the whole are larger than those found on palm leaves. One of the two leaves illustrated here depicts the enthroned Buddha and the other, the goddess Mahāpratisarā. The Buddha is flanked by two devotees, and obviously, the scene represents the opening verses of the sūtra, where the Buddha himself is said to expound the text. Mahāpratisarā is also seated on a lotus, is framed by a flame tipped aureole, and is accompanied by two figures, one of whom clearly represents a devotee, while the other is the personification of disease and is shown fleeing from the goddess' presence. Even this minimal expression of drama is not usually apparent in such hieratic representations and hence these illuminations appear particularly animated. The drawing is full of zest and vitality, and the conceptually rendered plants and trees help considerably to enliven the composition. Although the palette is somewhat limited, the brilliant red, yellow and green attain an unusual degree of vivacity against the deep indigo of the paper, while the wide borders, with their gay, floral and geometric motifs, enhance the decorative quality of the entire page.

VI

It has already been remarked that after the introduction of paper, palm leaf became less popular, although it continued to be used even as late as the fifteenth century. Its influence remained paramount until the nineteenth, for the format and shape of the manuscript did not alter substantially despite the introduction of paper. Paper manuscripts imitated the oblong, horizontal format of the palm leaf, and the vertically oriented book, introduced in India by the Muslims, did not capture the Nepali imagination.

While manuscripts were illuminated even into the nineteenth century, the most creative phase for this form of art seems to have been the period between 1000 and 1400. Thereafter, the interest in illustrated manuscripts diminished progressively, which resulted in a consequent decline in the quality of the paintings. Except for the *Kāraṇḍavyūha*, which extols the merits of worshopping the Bodhisattva Avalokiteśvara, no new texts other than the *Prajñāpāramitā*, the *Pañcarakṣā* and the *Dhāraṇīsaṁgraha* were added to the artist's repertoire. The two latter were especially popular and were mostly illuminated with hieratic images (Figs. 37, 38, 44-46, 49).

The illuminators of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries continued to paint basically in the earlier tradition, although they did affect certain distinct stylistic changes. The drawing now is characterized by perfunctoriness, and the outline, which in the earlier figures by some magic imparted a sense of modelled volume, now merely encloses the form. There is a mechanical rigidity about the figures as they sit or stand in formal elegance. The mellifluent contours and graceful dispositions which distinguish the earlier forms are now replaced by contrived postures obviously reflecting a mannered and somewhat exhausted style. There is a preference for stiff, attenuated figures with disproportionately broad faces and cursively rendered features. No longer are the goddesses voluptuous creatures of visual delight as in the earlier illuminations. The smoothly modelled sensuous breasts are now substituted by mere circles and dots which only symbolize the breasts rather than suggest their plastic rotundity and full forms.

As if to compensate for this stiff formality of the figures, some artists employed an ornate and lively floral scroll to adorn the background (Fig. 40). This dense vine-like scroll moves over the surface with effortless ease and frequently animates the composition. Although the scroll pattern was employed occasionally by earlier artists with restraint, it now becomes the predominant element of design, especially on the covers (Figs. 38, 41). Indeed, these vivacious and luxuriant floral scrolls are drawn with great variation and vitality and it is obvious that the artists delighted in rendering this ornamental motif.

Of the later illuminated manuscripts of the *Prajñāpāramitā*, the most interesting is that copied in 1511 and now preserved in the Royal Library in Copenhagen. Although the manuscript itself is illuminated only with hieratic images, its covers are richly painted with scenes from the life of the Buddha and there seems no doubt that the same artist was responsible for both. Apart from depicting the usual scenes from the life of the Buddha, he has introduced a few others such as Siddhārtha's departure from the palace, the cutting of his hair (Fig. 39), and his being offered food by the maiden Sujātā (Fig. 40). Besides such thematic additions, the paintings are rendered in a style altogether different from that of the earlier illuminations. More will be said about this style of painting in a subsequent chapter, but it may be pointed out here that although the style has changed, the visual formula has not, and the more familiar scenes, such as those of the nativity or the enlightenment, still retain the same basic compositional scheme which we first encountered almost five hundred years previously.

Although *Prajñāpāramitā* texts continued to be copied well into the nineteenth century, only a few were illuminated. Where we do encounter illustrations, as in a seventeenth century manuscript (Fig. 43), they are hardly comparable either in terms of delicacy or visual grace to the earlier representations. Indeed, the decreasing popularity of the *Prajñāpāramitā* seems generally to coincide with the decline of Buddhism itself in Nepal. After the fifteenth century the religion became increasingly ritual-oriented, and hence, philosophical treatises such as the *Prajñāpāramitā* were replaced in importance by such texts as the *Kāraṇḍavyūha* extolling the Bodhisattva Avalokiteśvara (Fig. 42) or the *Dhāraṇīsaṁgraha* (Fig. 44), which is concerned with laudatory verses and charms dedicated to individual deities. The illuminations in such manuscripts are of a strictly hieratic nature and are important more for iconographic than aesthetic reasons.

By the mid-seventeenth century significant stylistic changes occurred due largely to external influences. While these new elements of style affected other forms of painting more profoundly, nonetheless they did modify manuscript illuminations to a considerable degree. Some of these features were borrowed or adopted from the Mughal-Rajput traditions of India; others show distinct, though ill-digested, influences of seventeenth century Tibetan painting.

Among the most sumptuous illuminations of this period are two sets of covers of *Pañcarakṣā* manuscripts (Figs. 45, 46). In both sets one of the covers is filled with enshrined and hieratic images of the five Pañcarakṣā goddesses along with Vasudhārā, Tārā and two guardian divinities. Each of the other covers portrays groups of devotees worshipping at two shrines of the Buddha. Curiously, an image of the preaching Buddha is enshrined in the middle of the composition, while a second figure seated on a lion—and carrying a pot only on the Cleveland example—is represented in open landscape. The enshrined Buddha on the Cleveland cover is identified by an inscription as Bhagavān.

Although the subject matter is identical in both sets of covers, it is instructive to note their similarities as well as their differences. In both the shrines are placed in basically similar landscapes; the goddesses, however, are disposed differently. While on the Cleveland cover they are represented in an open landscape, on the other they are enclosed within intricately designed shrines. With regard to the scenes of worship only the details are different while the composition is identical in both. On the left of each composition is a group of devotees worshipping the Buddha; then follows the central temple surrounded by more devotees; a little further away is a river beyond which is a house. It would not be too far-fetched to suggest that the house symbolizes the outer limits of a town, while the shrine is situated in a forest clearing. Whether the shrine represents an important pilgrimage site within the valley or is an imaginary depiction is more difficult to determine. At any rate, the topography is too generalized for a specific identification.

The landscape, with its rolling hills, woolly clouds and bulbous trees, is typically Nepali, even if some of the constituent elements are borrowed from Rajput or Tibetan paintings. Apart from the fact that the motifs are rendered conceptually, the emphasis is on achieving an integrated topographical design rather than a naturalistic representation. Despite the basic similarity of composition, it is interesting to note how the two artists varied their designs of the hills, of the buildings and of the trees and clouds. While a larger number of worshippers is included in one cover (Fig. 46), in both sets the devotees are represented in a regimented manner. That the two sets of covers are contemporary works from the same atelier is evident; whether the same artist was responsible for both is less easy to ascertain. As a curious footnote, and to emphasize the demonstrable rigidity of the convention, it may be pointed out that, although the artist in one instance has represented the goddesses within shrines, he has added between each arch a small circle enclosing a figure, thereby repeating the design of the tree above each goddess on the Cleveland cover.

More exciting, both in terms of iconography and formal elements, is a pair of covers, also of the eighteenth century, belonging to the Binney collection (Figs. 47, 48). (Both covers are filled with incidents from the life of the Buddha and each scene is identified by a descriptive label. One of the covers depicts the following incidents from left to right: a Tathāgata preaching in heaven; the dream of Māyā in which Siddhārtha as a white elephant enters his future mother's womb; the birth of Siddhārtha; his lustration and proclamation of sovereignty by taking the seven steps; his education; his encounter with a monk; and his flight on the horse Kaṇṭhaka. The incidents on the second cover are: his tonsure; meditation at Bodhgaya; acceptance of rice cooked in milk from Sujātā; Māra's attack; adoration by the gods; the first sermon at Sarnath; and, finally, the Mahāparinirvāṇa.)

It will at once be apparent that not only are the representations different from those we have encountered so far but they are also far more detailed. A comparison with contemporary narrative scrolls (Figs. 145, 150) will further demonstrate that the incidents are delineated as continuous narrations, the scenes being separated only by trees. At the same time, however, the trees, the buildings and the rolling hills are integrated into a single, coherent composition. While the mountains and the architecture are local in form, the foliage, as well as the manner in which the architectural elements are employed, is related to the mode of representation seen commonly in Pahari paintings. The palette, too, shows a wider variety than is usual, and no longer does the artist seem obsessed with the red, although it is still used generously. Equally prominent is the green of the hills and a resplendent blue employed for the sky. One misses, however, the patches of clouds used so ubiquitously by the artists of this period.

Among the specifically Tibetan elements in paintings of this period are prominent cloud patterns and jagged snowy peaks, peony-like lotuses and swirling garments and scarves. The idea of depicting a radiating aureole in gold behind the divinities was also very likely borrowed from Tibetan paintings. Finally, in some nineteenth century illuminations, such as those of the goddess Tārā (Fig. 49) or of a man adoring a horse (Fig. 50), the Tibetan elements appear to be so strong that one wonders whether they were not altogether painted by Tibetan artists. The quality of the illuminations is on the whole indifferent and there is a tendency to use bright, gaudy colours, as found in contemporary Tibetan paintings. Most of these illuminations depict hieratic images of gods and goddesses, but rather curious is the composition of a man worshipping a horse illustrating the Siṁhala Avadāna. Not only are the mountains and clouds in the background more naturalistically delineated but also is the horse. Seemingly the artist had actually observed a real horse, or perhaps seen an unusually realistic drawing of one. The mountains are not rendered simply as a continuous background, but convey a sense of space in relation to the horse and the man; nevertheless, one can hardly admire the illumination as an aesthetic tour de force.

Hindu Manuscript Illuminations

VIII

Just as there is no perceptible difference in the style of the script between Hindu and Buddhist manuscripts, so there is also none in the style of illumination. Almost certainly the same artists were responsible for painting both types of manuscripts, and hence, Hindu manuscript illuminations are characterized by the same kind of stylistic developments that we noticed in Buddhist manuscripts. It may also be noted that by comparison with the large number of Buddhist manuscripts fewer Hindu manuscripts were illustrated, and mostly the representations are restricted to the covers only.

The most popular Hindu texts to have been illuminated were those of the *purāṇas*. A purāṇa is an encyclopedic text which contains a variety of subjects, both religious and secular, mythological and historical, social as well as legal, and ritualistic as well as philosophical. Until the sixteenth century, however, it appears that only the text of the *Caṇḍī* or *Devīmāhātmya* of the *Mārkaṇḍeya Purāṇa* was illustrated, while other purāṇas were merely provided with wooden boards painted with resplendent images of deities. Few as they are, these painted covers are among the finest examples of early Nepali painting.

Two covers of a *Viṣṇudharma Purāṇa* manuscript, dated 1047 A.D., are the earliest surviving examples of Hindu illuminations provided we agree that the covers were painted at the same time when the manuscript was written. Both covers, preserved in the National Library in Kathmandu,[7] portray several interesting images of Viṣṇu accompanied by the guardians of the cardinal directions. The representations are hieratic and the gods are seated in the formal manner of *padmāsana*. More enchanting are the slim and elegant female figures engaged in adoring Viṣṇu. The drawing is particularly fine, and the sumptuous ornaments are executed with great delicacy. The style of the illuminations seems to be related to that of the Cambridge manuscript covers (Fig. 16), although very likely those of the *Viṣṇudharma* were rendered by a different artist. In any case there seems no reason to believe that these covers were painted later than 1071 when the Calcutta manuscript was completed (Figs. 18-20).

Equally engaging but more lively are the illuminations on two covers of an unknown Vaiṣṇava manuscript now in the British Museum (Fig. 51). Not only are the paintings interesting for their subject matter but the manner of representation too is especially attractive and reveals the same flair for originality encountered in the Los Angeles covers (Fig. 22). In addition to the ten conventional avatars of Viṣṇu, the artist has delineated several other themes which seem to be peculiar to these two covers. Moreover, the representations of the avatars are themselves quite distinctive and evince a strong interest in narration.

In the scene of the Matsya avatar, several fishes swim in the blue waters indicated symbolically by floating conchsehlls; obviously the largest fish in the middle represents the incarnation. Blue is also the background colour for the two next avatars, evidently as they both occurred in the waters. In the scene of the Kūrmāvatāra, in addition to the oversize tortoise, the artist has depicted several other aquatic creatures and conchshells. The figure of Varāha is particularly heroic as he strikes a militant posture and is given a snarling face. The nāgas coiled around his feet in this instance symbolize the nether regions from where the god rescued the earth. As usual the earth is represented as a charming female adoring her saviour as she is precariously perched on Varāha's right elbow. Following a narrow panel decorated with colourful gems, we see a demonic Narasiṁha (Man-lion) tearing apart Hiraṇyakaśipu's stomach as the devout Prahlāda watches. The next avatar, when Viṣṇu first assumed the form of a dwarf and then metamorphosed himself into a cosmic giant in order to destroy Bali's pride and ambition, is curiously shown in three separate panels. We first see Bali performing the sacrifice with his preceptor before a fire-altar, then he is seen making the ceremonial gift to the divine dwarf, and finally, he kneels in submission as he watches the giant Viṣṇu stretching his left leg into the air to cover the heavens. In view of the added importance accorded this avatar one wonders if the covers did not belong to a manuscript of the *Vāmana Purāṇa*.

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[7] For illustrations see, P. Pal, *Vaiṣṇava Iconology in Nepal*, Figs. 44-46.

The Vāmana avatar is followed by two simple compositions both showing two dark and crowned figures who are without any distinguishable emblems, but are both human. One of them seems to be engaged in conversation with a fair person, while the other is by himself. There seems little doubt that the dark figures in these two panels represent Rāma and Paraśurāma, the first human avatars of Viṣṇu. In the second cover the first panel shows a dark four-armed Viṣṇu before whom sits a light-coloured male devotee. Normally this should be the fair Balarāma, Kṛṣṇa's elder brother who is regarded as the eighth avatar in the conventional list. Here, however, the god does not hold a pestle, which is Balarāma's distinctive emblem, but the four conventional attributes of Viṣṇu, and since his complexion is dark, we must assume the artist intended to depict the figure jointly as Kṛṣṇa-Viṣṇu. The two next avatars are the Buddha and Kalki and both are represented in the established manner except for the fact that Kalki has a bare torso but still wears boots.

The remaining scenes are rather more difficult to identify as they appear to be peculiar to this particular cover. In the panel following Kalki we see a sleeping figure resting one of his two visible heads on one of his right arms. The other right arm is invisible but he does have two left arms. That he has an additional left head is clear, but whether he is provided with a third head is uncertain. At his feet sits a light-complexioned figure with his right hand cusped behind his right ear. If the recumbent figure represents the sleeping Viṣṇu then we have no explanation for the additional head nor for the seated male. Normally in such scenes the figure at his feet is that of his consort Lakṣmī. Then follows a wide panel in which a couple is engaged in worshipping an image of Viṣṇu or the god himself. In the next panels Viṣṇu is seated with his consort Śrī-Lakṣmī remarkably like Śiva and Pārvatī in a *Śivadharma* cover (Fig. 52). It may be pointed out that such an intimate disposition of the pair is rather unusual in Vaiṣṇava art. The following panel showing a pair of seated worshippers seems to be related to the image of the divine couple on the lotus. The last composition is rather damaged but enough remains to identify the scene as one of ritual consecration (*abhiṣeka*) in which two sages are engaged in pouring water over a crowned, seated figure who cannot be identified.

Although the covers are executed in the same basic Monastic style, the artist reveals an unusual inventiveness, not only in the selection of the subject matters, but also in the manner of delineation. Some of the more heroic themes are rendered with considerable attention to the dramatic aspects of the stories and with a wealth of detail rarely encountered in other representations of these subjects. Although he conforms to the usual Nepali manner of alternating blues and reds in the individual panels, all the incidents taking place in water are given a blue background. His draughtsmanship is sure and faultless and his figures are infused with remarkable natural grace. He was particularly deft in handling his figures in a variety of postures as is evident from the relaxed and convincing portrayal of the recumbent figure. Partly because of the great diversity of the subject matter and partly because of the technical virtuosity of the artist, these diminutive compositions are both elegantly animated and visually refreshing.

IX

Ten stereotyped and somewhat static representations of the avatars of Viṣṇu adorn one cover of a *Śivadharma* manuscript in the National Library in Kathmandu.[8] Although the manuscript is not dated, the suggested date of early twelfth century for the covers seems to be correct. The ten avatars are contained within intricate and ornate shrines of richly adorned pillars and filigree-like arches. As on the Cambridge and the British Museum covers (Figs. 16, 51) a curtain is provided as a background, thereby creating a curious stage-like effect.

More appealing and varied is the second cover of the *Śivadharma* manuscript

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[8] *Idem*, Fig. 27-28.

(Fig. 52), for in contrast to the rather static figures of Viṣṇu we here encounter more animated compositions. Once again the entire cover is divided into several compositional segments by means of pillars and arches. In the centre Śiva and Pārvatī are ensconced in a rocky cave and are accompanied by Gaṇeśa and Kumāra. At the apex of the rocky arch the four-armed river-goddess Gaṅgā pours water over the divine couple. In several other segments we see an emaciated ascetic conversing with a kneeling figure; another worshipping an angry from of Śiva; a lady, perhaps Pārvatī, again conversing with Śiva; and a dark but youthful yogi discoursing to a bearded man and his wife. The young yogi, seated upon the skin of a black buck, appears to be nude except for a *yogapaṭṭa* tied around his waist and knee. In point of fact, however, all three yogis or sages wear minimal strips of cloth which cover only their genitalia, as is still done by mendicants in India and Nepal today. While we cannot be certain about the identification of the ascetics, who are probably sages mentioned in the text, the bearded man and his wife may represent the donors.

Both in terms of visual design as well as the expressiveness of the representations, this *Śivadharma* cover remains, along with the British Museum examples (Fig. 51), among the most lively and sumptuously illuminated Hindu covers discovered so far. Obviously the artist was a master and especially adept in drawing figures which seem to be the epitome of grace and elegance. A mellow tenderness envelopes the fondly embracing Śiva and Pārvatī who are the divine exemplars of conjugal love. The gestures of the sages as well as the devotees are subtle but expressive, while the figures themselves are remarkably naturalistic in their attitudes and postures. Especially perceptive is the delineation of the dignified but gentle donor with his distinguished face, flowing white hair, and beard. Indeed, so realistic is the representation that one wonders whether it was modelled from life. In contrast to the second cover depicting Viṣṇu's incarnations, the pillars and arches are less ornate, but a new decorative element is encountered here for the first time in the form of a delicate vegetative scroll motif filling the background behind the figures. As we will note later, this motif will become a cliche in subsequent Nepali paintings and will survive for an inordinately long period of time. In no way, however, does the ornament engulf the figures on the *Śivadharma* cover; on the contrary, it seems rather to enhance the liveliness of the representation.

A somewhat different style characterizes the illuminations on another cover (Fig. 53), probably of a Śaiva manuscript. Along with the guardians of the eight directions and their consorts, both Brahmā and Viṣṇu are engaged in adoring the Śivaliṅga. All the figures sit gracefully and in a relaxed manner on cushions and are oriented towards the liṅga in the centre. Between each figure is a delicately rendered flower crowning a swaying stem. A red curtain stretches along the entire length of the cover and the figures are delineated rather sensitively in unusually light and soft colours. In terms of the simplicity of the representations and the strongly linear as well as graphic qualities of the drawing, these illuminations are reminiscent of the Los Angeles covers showing scenes from the Buddha's life (Fig. 22).

A tender representation of Śiva and Pārvatī ensconced in a cave occurs on a cover of a *Śivadharma* manuscript in the Cambridge University Library (Fig. 54). Although the manuscript itself was copied in 1139, it is doubtful whether the covers were painted at the same time. The style of the illumination seems closer to that of the Bharat Kala Bhavan *Devīmāhātmya* (Figs. 55-58) which cannot be earlier than the fourteenth century. Certainly when compared with the more spectacular *Śivadharma* cover of the twelfth century (Fig. 52), this representation seems more mannered and somewhat cursively drawn. However, one cannot altogether rule out the possibility that it was executed in a more freehand style by a twelfth century artist who was not quite as accomplished as the master responsible for the other *Śivadharma*.

Basically the artist has repeated the same compositional formula which is used for the divine couple on the earlier *Śivadharma* cover. Neither Gaṇeśa nor Kumāra is included here but Nandi is given prominence. The cave itself is much larger, although it is once again delineated as an arched opening. The rock formations are far more exuberantly rendered with their tips swaying in a most unnatural fashion. A tiger and a goat are added to indicate the typical mountain scene, and two formal plaintain trees stand like sentinels on either side. In the two upper corners are the symbols of the sun and the moon and the entire ground, which is a deep blue, is sprinkled with sprigs and flowers announcing the divine presence. The drawing was done rather quickly and somewhat carelessly, and the modelling, especially of Pārvatī's figure, is not quite as plastic as in other twelfth century representations. The composition is inexorably symmetrical, not only in the shapes of the rocks but even in the details of flowers. Rather curious, however, is the delineation of the rocks on which the divine couple is seated, for they appear to recede into the background, thereby imparting a certain feeling of depth.

X

The most popular and frequently illuminated Hindu text is that of the *Devīmāhātmya*, which extolls the greatness of the goddess Durgā and her destruction of the ambitious Mahiṣāsura. It is especially venerated by the Hindus in Nepal, just as the *Pañcarakṣā* is by the Buddhists. The subject matter is primarily concerned with battles, and hence, one often encounters rather spirited representations in its illuminations.

Unquestionably, the most colourful and exciting illustrations are those in a manuscript in the Bharat Kala Bhavan (Figs. 55-58). Of the four representations reproduced here, two show peaceful incidents while the other two depict battle scenes. In a particularly charming composition (Fig. 55) we encounter Mahiṣāsura's messenger approaching the goddess with a proposal of marriage on behalf of his master. Portrayed as a young girl the goddess sits comfortably on a rock ledge as she converses with the messenger. The scene takes place in the Vindhya mountains which are represented symbolically by the colourful cubes of rocks and a solitary tree. Although both figures are depicted in the typical partial profile, we note at least an incipient attempt to achieve a painterly composition. A more formal treatment is apparent in the scene of worship (Fig. 56), in which the goddess, provided with additional arms and emblems and seated on her lion mount, occupies the greater part of the composition. The three adoring gods, however, are shown along the side in more naturalistic attitudes and once again in three-quarter profile.

Far more animated are the battle scenes, even if the representational formula is stereotyped. In one (Fig. 57) we see a vigorous Viṣṇu attacking the demons Madhu and Kaiṭabha. That the scene takes place beside an ocean is rather perfunctorily though graphically indicated by the rectangular strip of water in the foreground. The water is represented schematically with fishes floating in it and continues the same basic formula encountered in earlier illuminations (Fig. 17). The two giant serpents coiling around Viṣṇu's feet add considerable movement to the entire composition and appear far more militant than the rather limpid demons. In the second battle scene Durgā is seen attacking the demons Śumbha and Niśumbha with a drawn sword (Fig. 58). Indeed, in all battle scenes the artist has employed the same basic compositional formula. In both illustrations Durgā and Viṣṇu strike theatrical postures reminiscent of performers on a traditional stage (*yātrā*). The red background in all the illuminations is sprinkled with tiny flowers and the rocks are painted decoratively in sparkling mauves, greens and yellows.

The *Devīmāhātmya* continued to be illustrated through the following centuries (Figs. 12, 59, 62), but none of the later illuminations is as spirited as the Bharat Kala Bhavan examples. The representations of a battle scene on one of the folios of a manuscript in the Newark Museum is almost comical (Fig. 12, centre), while the covers, enlivened with the florid scroll design, are illuminated with hieratic images of the nine Mother Goddesses led by Gaṇeśa. Two other covers (Fig. 62), of about the seventeenth century, show a greater variety both in terms of iconography and in the manner of representation. Thematically the fourteen panels on the two covers succinctly visualize the entire story of the *Devīmāhātmya*. In some of the panels we see the goddess actively engaged in battle, although here too the delineation is without any drama or tension; in others the more conventional formula is employed, and the representation is both frontal and static. As usual, the panels, filled with the florid ornamental scrolls, are painted alternately in red and blue. The shape of the rocks has changed, but they still retain their lively decorative quality. Altogether the representations, not quite as vivacious as the earlier examples, are still appealing because of the varied compositions of the different panels.

XI

As with the Buddhist, the most pleasing and visually exciting Hindu illuminations were rendered between the eleventh and the fourteenth centuries. There is a stronger tendency after the fourteenth to adorn the manuscripts and their covers with formal images of deities rather than with narrative subjects. However, with the steady decline of Buddhism and the increasing importance of both Śivaism and Viṣṇuism, a larger variety of Hindu manuscripts appears to have been written and provided with illuminated covers after the fifteenth century.

In the previous chapter we have already alluded to a manuscript of 1235, the covers of which seem to have been illuminated some time in the fifteenth century (Fig. 60). The pictures are more interesting for their subject matter than they are for their aesthetic quality. One of the covers shows Rāma, the hero of the *Rāmāyaṇa*, his wife Sītā, his brother Lakṣmaṇa, and the devoted monkeys, Hanumān and Sugrīva. Rāma, of course, is seated in the middle and his divine status is announced by an aureole and a nimbus. All the figures are oriented towards Rāma and although their bodies are shown almost frontally their heads are in three-quarter profile. The other cover of this manuscript depicts in the centre a four-armed Śiva dancing on his bull, Nandi. Two flying celestial beings offer the god what appear to be garlands, and a pair of divine attendants also dance with their master. Both covers are provided with formally delineated trees, birds and a stylized, three-pointed, decorative motif of a purely imaginary form.

Among other manuscripts of the period, a typical example is a *Pujāvidhi* in the

Asiatic Society, Calcutta. Written in the year 1573, the manuscript was probably illuminated at the same time. Rendered in the same basic style as the two covers just discussed, the illuminations (Fig. 61) show hieratic images of little artistic merit. Indeed, if the scribe who wrote the text was also responsible for the illustrations then we must admit that he was a far better copyist than an artist. Nevertheless, art historically these illuminations are of considerable importance as they are among the few dated examples of this particular style of painting.

Unquestionably the most spirited and aesthetically pleasing examples of late Hindu illuminations are those that occur on two covers of an unknown manuscript (Fig. 63).[9] Each cover is painted on both sides, but the most arresting composition is that which shows a plump Gaṇeśa dancing gracefully as he accepts sweets offered by a lady. Whether the lady is Gaṇeśa's mother Pārvatī or his wife is difficult to ascertain; the lion, which looks more like a fu dog, is generally Pārvatī's mount. Curiously, the accompaniment for Gaṇeśa is being provided by Śiva himself and by Mahākāla, both of whom play upon the drums. A master draughtsman, the artist has realized Gaṇeśa's obese though graceful form with consummate artistry.) On the inside of the cover a king, whose identity will be discussed in a subsequent chapter, is engaged in worshipping, along with a royal priest, a floating image of Matsyendranātha. The king holds a lotus while the priest seemingly offers a manuscript either to the king or to Matsyendranātha. Both mortals are shown in profile and they appear to face one another. On the exterior of the second cover is a hieratic representation of Sarasvatī, the goddess of learning, accompanied by two more female figures; on the inside, the same royal priest who appears with the king is seen adoring an elephant and her calf. Both animals are gaily caparisoned and the larger seems to cary a tiny stupa on its head.(The elephants as well as Gaṇeśa's rat and Sarasvatī's goose, are rendered with less assurance, and the lions are so stylized that they appear almost as caricatures.)

We have already mentioned that by the mid-seventeenth century Nepali artists came strongly under the influence of the contemporary Rajput tradition of India. The portraits of the king as well as the priest on the covers just discussed are rendered in the typical profile representation of contemporary Rajput paintings. The influence of Rajput art is also clearly evident in two other covers, probably of a Vaiṣṇava manuscript dating from the late seventeenth century (Fig. 64). Although the gods and demons continue to be depicted in the traditional Nepali manner, the human figures are directly adapted from Rajput painting. The donors and the priests are identified by inscriptions but their portrayals are idealized as was the custom with the representations of donor figures in the paubhās. However, despite their regimented disposition and stereotyped postures, the figures are articulately drawn and are given clear and crisp definition against monochromatic background.

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[9] For all four illustrations see, P. Pal, *Nepal/Where the Gods are Young*, pp. 122-123.

Visually more exciting are two other eighteenth century covers, probably of a Śaiva manuscript (Fig. 65). In both, several hieratic images of divinities and Śivalingas are placed in a landscape setting with flowing water and rolling mountains crowned with jagged peaks. On one of the covers the central Śivalinga, representing Paśupatinātha who is the patron deity of Nepal, is flanked by the goddesses Jayavāgīśvarī and Bāgmatī on the right of the linga and by Jayavatsalādevī and Vajrayoginī on the left. A tiny vase immediately on the right of the linga, which is surrounded by flames, is identified by an inscription as Guhyeśvarī. On the second cover the central figure is identified as Garuḍāsana Nārāyaṇa, and the two goddesses flanking him are his consorts Sarasvatī and Śrī-Lakṣmī. More interesting is the representation of the deer with two figures at the far left of the cover, identified by an inscription as *mṛgasthali*. This is obviously a succinct depiction of the legend concerning Śiva who once assumed the form of a deer and is said to reside perennially in the wooded area around the temple of Paśupatinātha. Hence, the name of the locality is Mrigasthali or the land of the deer. At the other end of the cover a tilted linga is identified as *kirāteśvara* (Fig. 66), and it may be noted that an ancient mukhalinga of the early Licchavi period can still be seen similarly tilted on the bank opposite the temple of Paśupatinātha.

There seems no doubt that the two covers are meant to represent the area around temple of Paśupatinātha on the bank of the river Bagmati. In fact, in both covers the artist has depicted the river in the foreground, the further bank being indicated by a row of rocks. The mountains behind the figures create a sense of spatial depth, although this is an incidental effect rather than a conscious attempt to render an illusionist landscape. As always, the overriding concern of the artist was to create a pleasing visual design in an orderly fashion with the figures placed in a picturesque landscape setting while adhering to strict laws of symmetry. Instead of the artificial curtain or the intricate pillars and arches, natural forms are here employed basically in a similar manner to isolate the images of gods and goddesses which of course remain of paramount significance.

In the nineteenth century the shape of the manuscript did not alter fundamentally, but the pages often became larger, as may be seen from a typical leaf of a *Rāmāyaṇa* illustrated here (Fig. 67). As a result, the area set aside for illumination is larger, which provided the painter with opportunities to create more elaborate compositions. Each illustration now contains a large number of figures and, because of the subject matter, landscape elements are freely introduced. The picture, nonetheless, remains strongly figurative and natural elements are still employed to provide a decorative background for the figures. As we will note elsewhere, by now Nepali artists were not only familiar with Mughal-Rajput paintings, but also with European works. By and large, however, they adhered to their conventional though graphic, pictorial tradition characterized by bright, contrasting colours and purely decorative design. Their aesthetic aim always was to emphasize the paramountcy of the figure, whether human or divine.

CHAPTER FOUR

RELIGIOUS PAINTINGS

I

Religious paintings worshipped as icons are known in Sanskrit as *paṭa* and in Newari as *paubhā*. The word *paubhā* may have derived from one of two Sanskrit words, either *pratibhā* or *prabhā*. The former means an "image" and the latter splendour or radiance. In either case the word *paubhā* is particularly appropriate for religious paintings which are distinguished by their bright and luminous surfaces. By contrast, paṭa is more prosaic, for it generally means cloth, and specifically, painted cloth.

Because paubhās are essentially religious icons, the artist was bound by certain immutable iconographic rules and aesthetic canons which had been established by theological precepts and long-standing tradition. Colours in such paintings were invariably determined by religious needs and the picture surface is always suffused with uniformly luminous hues. It was unnecessary for the artist to experiment with light and shade since the divine world is regarded as perpetually effulgent. The composition is determined by inexorable laws of symmetry and visual order, for a divine image cannot exist in chaos and disharmony. In such a strongly religious tradition individual preferences had to remain subordinate to dictates of theology, although one must not conclude that the creative urge in the artist was necessarily emasculated. On the contrary, while a large majority of the paubhās exhibit a hieratic uniformity, time and again we encounter instances where gifted artists have displayed their extraordinary aesthetic sensibility and artistic virtuosity.

All paubhās are painted on coarse cotton which is primed with conchshell to provide a smooth surface. The outline is carefully drawn either in red or black and then filled in with colours. The pigments are derived both from minerals and vegetable extracts and the principal binding material is a gum resin readily soluble in water. This is one reason why the colours often prove to be fugitive and the paintings are easily destroyed if they come into contact with water. In general one might say that all Nepali paintings are executed in opaque watercolours, the opacity deriving from the binding medium. More often than not a paubhā is rectangular in shape, the height being greater than the width, and its size obviously depended upon the affluence of the patron.

For some inexplicable reason the Nepalis provided their paubhās with inscriptions, which contain specific dates of consecration, far more frequently than they did with sculpted images. Beginning with the 1367 Vasudhārāmandala (Fig. 72), dated paubhās occur almost every fifty years until the nineteenth century. Very few paubhās, however, can with reasonable certainty be placed earlier than the fourteenth century and these will be discussed at some length. It may also be of interest to note that far more Buddhist than Hindu paubhās have survived. The painted icon seems to have a greater fascination for the Buddhists than the Hindus unless we assume that the latter were particularly prone to destroying their paubhās.

Buddhist Paubhās

II

The earliest dated Nepali paubhā which has yet come to light is a mandala of the goddess Vasudhārā consecrated in the town of Patan in 1367 (Fig. 72).[1] The mandala itself takes up the greater part of the composition and consists of several concentric squares with elaborate portals on each cardinal face contained within a circle, defined as a lotus fringed with stylized flames. Each corner outside this circle is filled with additional figures framed by foliate arches. On either side of the mandala and along the top are representations of didactic stories which commend the worship of the goddess; immediately below are the eight great miracles from the life of the Buddha. The register at the summit of the painting depicts the five Tathāgatas flanked by other deities of the pantheon, and at the bottom are scenes of ritual annointment including musicians and dancers.

We are at once struck by the enormous iconographic complexity of the mandala, but how deftly the artist has handled his subject. Every detail is rendered with metriculous care, and despite the richness of design, the painting is a fine example of formal elegance and clarity of expression. Symbolically a mandala is a visual attempt to recreate a world of order and symmetry, and these qualities are of paramount importance in its composition. Although every mandala is always a paradigm of geometric consistency and coherence, it is remarkable how one differs from the other, as may be gleaned from several examples illustrated here (Figs. 74, 97,

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[1] For colour reproduction, see P. Pal, *Nepal/Where the Gods are Young*, p. 59, fig. 43.

99). Astonishingly also they are never monotonous, and despite the preponderance of figures, a mandala remains an epitome of lucid design and visual harmony.

A cursory comparison between the Vasudhārāmandala and contemporary manuscript illuminations (Figs. 27-29) will make it clear that they are all executed in the same basic style. Indeed, that the mode of delineation encountered in manuscript illuminations exerted a strong influence upon the paubhās is evident from the repetitive use of the same visual formulae in both types of pictures. This becomes quite apparent if we examine the representations of the eight great miracles in the paubhā with those encountered in manuscripts (Figs. 21, 24). As in the illuminations, in the Vasudhārāmandala too each miracle is depicted with utmost economy and admirable clarity. There seems no doubt that the same artists who were responsible for illustrating the manuscripts were also called upon to paint paubhās for there is no difference either in technique or style.

Among other noteworthy features of the Vasudhārāmandala are the scenes of ritual ceremonies represented in five panels in the bottom register. Beginning from the left the first panel depicts a priest along with attendants offering oblation into a sacrificial fire. The second panel is occupied by a regally attired figure, distinguished from his companions by his loftier seat. All of them appear to be watching the dance performance in the central panel, while in the next we encounter the earliest known representation of a Nepali orchestra. The scene is reminiscent of the dancer and musicians in the Aurangabad caves in India,[2] and dancing was obviously an important part of Buddhist temple ritual. The imposingly enthroned figure represents a king, while the donor and members of his family are shown in the last panel in a typically humble attitude. Similar scenes of ritual ceremonies occur frequently on later paubhās and the visual formula remains basically the same, although iconographic variations are not uncommon. Sometimes the dancers and musicians are replaced by hieratic images of divinities (Figs. 78-81), at other times the traditional seven jewels or auspicious symbols of Buddhism are introduced (Figs. 85, 97, 99).

By comparison with the 1367 Vasudhārāmandala at least three paubhās can be regarded as earlier. All three are quite small in size and, considering their age, are remarkably well preserved.

Two of these paintings form a pair and must once have belonged to a set of five (Figs. 68-70).[3] Each paubhā is dominated by the impressive, enthroned figure of a

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[2] W. Spink, *Ajanta to Ellora*, Ann Arbor, n.d., p. 35, fig. 3.

[3] For a colour reproduction of the Boston example, see J. Fontein and P. Pal, *Muumes of Fine Arts Boston/Oriental Art*, Boston, 1970, pl. 105.

Tathāgata who is richly ornamented and crowned. The red Tathāgata is Amitābha and the yellow Ratnasambhava, two of the five Tathāgatas constituting the Vajrayāna pentad. Each is surrounded by a host of Bodhisattvas, other Tathāgatas and selected deities of the Vajrayāna pantheon. Altogether there are twenty-four figures in each painting and the principal deity is surrounded immediately by eight Bodhisattvas, while seven others are represented below the throne. Along the top register in the paubhā of Ratnasambhava (Fig. 68) all eight figures are Tathāgatas, but in the other (Fig. 70) only four are. The ground of each painting is strewn with flowers to indicate divine presence.

There seems little doubt that both paintings were executed by the same master. Apart from the identical composition, every detail is almost precisely similar in both works. Especially elaborate and attractive are the exquisitely rendered thrones with their lively animals and intricate floral scrolls. The drawing, whether of the figures or of the decorative motifs, is firm but fluid and could only have been done by a master draughtsman. The strong colours, although largely determined by iconographic needs, have a warm and rich tonality. In both paintings the textiles and ornaments have received special attention and, notwithstanding the absence of gold, these details sparkle with gem-like brilliance. The severely formal organization of the composition is superbly compensated by the sinuous and graceful figures and by the liveliness and variation of the ornamental patterns. Neither paubhā bears a date, but their chronological position can be firmly determined by a comparison with securely dated works. Even a cursory comparison with the 1367 Vasudhārāmandala (Fig. 72) clearly indicates that the two Tathāgata paintings must be earlier. If we then compare them with manuscript illuminations of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries (Figs. 21-26), it seems incontrovertible that the figures in the paubhās are very close in style to those in the illuminations and reveal the same elegant proportions and smooth sensuous modelling. Furthermore, a thirteenth century date seems also to be corroborated by the paleography of the inscription giving the Buddhist creed at the back of each paubhā.

Of about the same date is a beautiful paubhā representing the Buddhist goddess Tārā now in the Cleveland Museum (Fig. 71).[4] The enthroned goddess is enclosed by an exquisitely rendered shrine of a type seen more commonly in Indian manuscripts. In contrast to the intense red employed for the background, her green complexion is particularly soothing. Her right hand, rendered as sensitively as that of the Tathāgata Ratnasambhava (Fig. 68), is engaged in blessing a monk wearing a pale yellow robe. The two narrow pillars of the shrine contain eight diminutive representations of Tārā, symbolizing her role as the deliverer from the eight great perils (*aṣṭamahābhaya*).

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[4] For a colour reproduction see, Pal, *op. cit.*, p. 55, fig. 40.

Perhaps the finest example of Nepali painting known so far, it is an inspired work of a master who may have belonged to the same atelier from which the two Tathāgata paubhās emerged. Here too we notice the same emphasis on sumptuous details and a remarkable similarity in the manner of drawing. Although the design of the shrine—which includes tiny figures of divinities rendered with great precision and clarity despite their size—is both prominent and incredibly intricate, the entire composition is characterized by a sense of unusual perspicuity and buoyancy. Notwithstanding the dense though brilliant red, the palette is refreshingly varied and consists of blues, greens, browns, pinks, mauve, orange, white and yellow. The tiered roofs of the shrine are beautifully fringed with clusters of trees the leaves of which are rendered in several shades of green and sprinkled with orange, red, white and green flowers sparkling like sequins on a Christmas tree. As in the paintings of the Tathāgatas, the animals supporting the throne and the shrine are graceful and lively, while the heraldic and gaping animal heads along the bottom add a touch of whimsy to this otherwise hieratic subject matter. The cool, green figure of the goddess is the epitome of serene elegance and altogether the painting communicates a feeling of unmitigated joy.

III

Several paubhās, the majority of which are Buddhist, can be placed in the fourteenth century with a fair amount of certainty. The most elaborate of these is a mandala of Vasudhārā (Fig. 74), although the configuration of the mandala is substantially different from that of the 1367 paubhā. The iconographic differences need not detain us here, but fundamentally the same pantheon is represented in both mandalas and the story narrated in the marginal panels is that of the Sucandra Avadāna. The artist has not included the eight great miracles from the life of the Buddha but the edificatory tale is depicted more elaborately. Along the bottom are the usual representations of the priest performing the *homa* ceremony, of the dancer with her musicians and of the donors. In the second and the fourth panels, however, are the seven auspicious symbols of Buddhism consisting of a queen, a prime minister, a general, an elephant, a horse, a wheel, and a gem.

Of the several didactic stories associated with Vasudhārā that of Sucandra appears to have been particularly popular. A wealthy merchant Sucandra had several sons, the youngest of whom was dissolute and committed an act of sacrilege by removing a brick from a caitya. Consequently the entire family was beset by great misfortune and Sucandra lost all his wealth and possessions. He then decided to visit the Buddha but had nothing to take as an offering. His wife found a bit of chain in a rat-hole which Sucandra exchanged for some flowers and went to Śākyamuni. Pleased with his devotion the Lord instructed him to perform the Vasudhārā rite, which Sucandra did and thereafter regained his fortune.[5]

The story is also represented in several later Vasudhārāmandalas (Figs. 97, 99). The painted versions of the narrative, however, are much more detailed than the summary given above. A comparison of the different representations reveals that the artists emphasized different episodes of the stories, although the basic formula for narration remained unchanged over the centuries. The composition of each frame is austerely economical, and the figures are represented in a flat though lively manner against a monochromatic red or blue background. Architectural elements or trees are added occasionally for topographical reasons but the primacy of the figures is always maintained. The mode of representation is graphic but stylized, and no attempt is made to portray fugitive emotions or to emphasize the dramatic elements of the story. Much was left to the imagination of the viewer and to the recitative skill of the narrator.

Of the other fourteenth century paintings a partly damaged example (Fig. 77) portrays the enshrined figure of the red form of Lokeśvara who is accompanied by four images of Tārā. Two other manifestations of the Bodhisattva and two representations of the sun and the moon gods are superimposed on the schematic rows of stupas which fill most of the paubhā's ground. The pedestal of the Bodhisattva is decorated with lotuses, curtains, heraldic lions and crouching elephants. Along the bottom in five compartments are depicted typical scenes of consecration with priests and donors.

Notwithstanding the strong similarity between the females in the Lokeśvara paubhā and the figure Lakṣmī in the 1420 Viṣṇumandala (Fig. 1), the former still retain the elegance and suavity of modelling more characteristic of earlier works (Figs. 72, 74). Indeed, the females within the lotus petals of the Viṣṇumandala reflect a manneristic stylization from which the four Tārā figures are quite free. The Lokeśvara painting seems to be earlier also by comparison with the 1416

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[5] For the story and a more detailed discussion of the iconography of Vasudhārā, see P. Pal, *Two Buddhist Paintings from Nepal.*

Lakṣacaitya (Fig. 79). The quality of the scrollwork decorating the shrine still echoes the liveliness and subtlety evident in earlier paintings (Figs. 68, 70). Thus, with reasonable certainty, we can attribute a date in the second half of the fourteenth century to the Los Angeles Lokeśvara.

What is arresting about the Lokeśvara paubhā is the repetitive use of the small caityas as a pleasing visual pattern. Usually such paubhās were consecrated during the performance of a rite known as Lakṣacaitya. Presumably, this is a symbolic way of donating a hundred thousand (*lakṣa*) caityas. The rite remained popular with Buddhists, as is evident from several later paubhās commissioned during different periods (Figs. 9, 79, 100, 129). It is of interest to note that in all later examples a prominent caitya with the figure of the goddess Uṣṇīṣavijayā invariably occupies the centre; thus, the Los Angeles paubhā is iconographically unique. In all such paintings the artists have made striking use of the caitya motif to create a design of visual compulsiveness. The figures in such paubhās remain relatively unobtrusive as the caitya motif creates exciting patterns of almost abstract shapes; and, despite the repetition of the motif, it is remarkable how varied the several compositions are.

Stylistically related to the Los Angeles Lokeśvara is an intriguing paubhā in the Bickford collection in Cleveland (Fig. 78). The painting is divided into three zones; the upper consists of two registers of monks, mahāsiddas and Vajrayāna deities, and the lower comprises a single band of six deities and a monk. More interesting is the large central zone which contains two confronting monks seated under two trees and engaged in conversation. One of them sits on the coils of a serpent, its hood forming a canopy above his head. The head of the other figure is enhaloed and his hands perform the dharmacakrapravartanamudrā. Since this gesture is given specifically to the Buddha when he is shown expounding the doctrine, one must assume that this monk represents the Buddha Śākyamuni. That this figure is more important than the other is implied by the nimbus as well as the ritual implements placed before him, including an incense burner, a mirror, a sandalpaste container, a thunderbolt (*vajra*) and a bell. The other personage holds a lotus stalk which would preclude his identification as the Buddha protected by the serpent king Mucalinda, as has been suggested.[6] Of greater significance is a bookstand supporting a manuscript placed between the two figures and almost at the height of their shoulders. Immediately above the book is a tiny image of the goddess Prajñāpāramitā. We can thus identify the scene as representing the occasion when the Buddha is said to have preached the *Prajñāpāramitā* doctrine to the saint Nāgārjuna who is usually represented as a monk with a serpent canopy. This identification gains further substance from the platform on which the two figures sit. Indicated by a uniform band of colourful rocks which continue behind Śākyamuni, they represent a mountainous locale where indeed the text was expounded. A treatment similar of rock façades may also be seen in at least two other paintings of the fifteenth century (Figs. 87, 89).

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[6] S. Czuma, *Indian Art from the George P. Bickford Collection*, Cleveland, 1975. Cat. No. 133.

Apart from the uniqueness of its subject matter the Bickford painting provides us with the only Nepali example of a type of composition more common in Tibetan painting, as I shall discuss in a subsequent chapter. Stylistically the paubhā is close to both the Los Angeles Lokeśvara (Fig. 77) and the Viṣṇumandala of 1420 (Fig. 1). Although the faces of Śākyamuni and Nāgārjuna are represented in three-quarter profile, the figurative type is very similar to that of Viṣṇu. Especially noteworthy are the manner in which they sit, the delicately rendered hands with slender, bean-pod-like fingers, the proportions of the figures as well as the features of the faces. Remarkably alike also are the two serpents behind Viṣṇu and Nāgārjuna, each hood being crowned with similarly stylized flames. While both artists reveal a marked predilection for the tapestry-like floral pattern, the design in the Bickford painting is rendered more delicately and is less obtrusive than that in the Lokeśvara. Thus, the Bickford paubhā seems to have been rendered some time after the Lokeśvara but before the Viṣṇumandala, possibly around the year 1400.

The remaining Buddhist painting of the fourteenth century (Fig. 73) introduces a classic representational formula which will remain unaltered through the centuries for paubhās of angry divinities. Although a large number of dancing deities and a few mahāsiddhas are portrayed in the fiery central region and in the marginal panels, the composition is obviously dominated by the imposing figure of the goddess Vajravārāhī or the Adamantine Sow. Brandishing a chopper with her right hand and holding a skull cup in the left, the monumental goddess dances with effortless ease balancing her left foot on the solar disc placed upon a corpse. Her naked body, of a red complexion, is strikingly set off against the dense background of even a richer red scroll which forms an aureole fringed with leaping orange flames. The Nepali artists were particularly fond of using one particular shade of red against another, and often with brilliant success. What is also astonishing is the crisp and precise definition of the silhouette against so busy a background. A fluent linear rhythm glides across the surface, and despite the effusion of dancing figures and exuberant ornamentation, the composition remains a classic instance of visual coherence and harmony.

IV

The continued piety and religious ardour of the Buddhists are well demonstrated by the large quantity of paubhās which have survived from the fifteenth and subsequent centuries. The avid interest in illuminated manuscripts displayed by Buddhist patrons of the earlier period seems now to have been replaced by an equally strong desire for paubhās. Nepali artists further had to meet the demands of a growing number of Tibetan merchants and pilgrims, and with increased production one cannot expect a sustained level of high aesthetic quality in all the works. In reviewing the paubhās of this period one must also remember that although the artistic process may be a continuing one, certain periods in the life of each nation are creatively fallow while others are especially fecund.

All artistic traditions, unless nourished by new ideas, begin to languish after a protracted existence and become inbred with repetitive use of the same visual formulae. Not until the seventeenth century was the Nepali painting tradition infused with fresh artistic ideas, and in continuing to work with the norms and motifs established by their forebears, the artists of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries often produced works that are religiously valid and technically competent but aesthetically uninspiring. However, although no fresh artistic ideas or modes were introduced or invented, gifted artists did create paubhās of absorbing interest and aesthetic charm. Even if the technical repertoire was limited, the reservoir of myths and iconography was always so overflowing that the artists never experienced a dearth of subject matter. Both Buddhist and Hindu mythologies, as well as the visionary world of the mystics, are rich and varied and translating such themes into a visual medium was not only an aesthetic challenge but also satisfied the artist's creative impulse.

Even among the known paubhās, and doubtless innumerable others are still buried in the storages of monasteries and Newar houses, the thematic variety is bewildering. With the expansion of the Tāntric pantheons, the iconography became extremely complex. The principal deities such as Lokeśvara, Vasudhārā or Candra, the moon-god, are accompanied by numerous acolytes and attendants who had to be skillfully accommodated within a given composition. The paubhā therefore remains strongly figurative and rarely are natural or landscape elements introduced except for their symbolic values. Whether a paubhā is a mandala or not, the strongly geometrical character of the composition, dominated by principles of symmetry and harmony, remained valid throughout. Although the creative impulse of the Nepali artist continued to produce beautiful paubhās as late as the eighteenth century, those painted in the first half of the fifteenth are particularly attractive both for their refined drawing and for their exquisite coloring.

The religious rites associated with both Amoghapāśa, a form of the Bodhisattva Avalokiteśvara, and Vasudhārā, the goddess of fertility and wealth, are particularly popular with the Buddhist Newars. The performance of such rites was apparently commemorated with paubhās, which not only represent the principal deities but also didactic stories extolling the glorification of such rites. Vasudhārā's popularity is understandable as she is the dispenser of material prosperity, and Amoghapāśa regarded as a patron deity of the valley, is invoked frequently to remove mundane obstacles. Among other Buddhist deities, the esoteric god Samvara or Mahāsamvara is represented by several paubhās and his cult appears to have been especially popular after the fifteenth century. Other angry deities, such as Mahākāla or Acala, also provided the artists with unusually dynamic themes which were often expressed with remarkable audacity and technical *tour de force.*

The visual formulae established in the fourteenth century paintings for benign as well as angry deities were continued by later generations of artists with very little substantial changes. In contrast to the paintings of the earlier period, post-fourteenth century paubhās are characterized by more crowded compositions and a more linear definition of form. In the earlier paubhās the figures, even though of paramount importance, seem to have a little more space to breathe in. By contrast, in paubhās of the fifteenth century and later, one notes a stronger obsession with *horror vacui*, and the compositions are often densely packed with either hieratic images or with framed miniature representations of stories. Frequently, however, these side panels, with their diminutive though lively figures or animated depictions of narrative subjects, provide a pleasant diversion from the strictly formal and repetitive design of the composition.

The increasingly linear definition of form is easily perceived from the figures, which in the fourteenth century paubhās, are still gracefully and suavely modelled, as in the earlier manuscript illuminations. In the early fifteenth century paintings (Figs. 1, 79), however, the figures begin to lose the sense of modelled volume achieved by earlier artists by means of subtle shading or a reinforced outline. The loss of modelling is particularly evident in the delineation of the female form; no longer are the breasts rendered as swelling and pneumatic masses, but are summarily indicated by simple circles with dots to signify the nipples. Pronounced differences may also be perceived in the physiognomy of the figures; those of earlier paubhās, like the figures in the early manuscript illuminations, reflect the idealized forms and features seen in Indian Buddhist paintings of the Gupta period. These idealized models continue to exert a strong influence upon the figurative types in paubhās even as late as in the 1367 Vasudhārāmandala. There is a distinct change in the facial types, however, in the Nāgārjuna paubhā or in the Viṣṇumandala (Figs. 1, 78). After the fifteenth century, not only does one notice a stronger ethnic stamp on the physiognomy with more pronounced Newari features, but also a wider variety of faces. Together with such physiological changes, distinct differences in the clothes and dresses are perceived first in the fifteenth century paubhās and again in those of the seventeenth.

It is neither my intention nor is it necessary to discuss at length all the paubhās reproduced in this book. A number, especially of the fifteenth and the sixteenth centuries, are included here simply because they are dated and are important historically. I shall confine my discussion, therefore, to those paubhās which are exceptional either for aesthetic or for iconographic reasons.

V

More than a score of fifteenth century Buddhist paubhās are known and generally they reflect the flourishing condition of religious painting among Buddhists. The earliest dated example is the 1416 Lakṣacaitya paubhā (Fig. 79) which has already been referred to. Although not the first painting of its type, it introduces us to the figure of Uṣṇīṣavijayā within the womb of the caitya. It may be recalled that in the earlier example (Fig. 77) no central caitya is depicted at all and the principal figure is the Bodisattva Avalokiteśvara. In another unusual representation of the subject (Fig. 80), also of the early fifteenth century, we find the Tathāgata Vairocana included within the caitya.[7] There is of course nothing unusual about this for Vairocana is supposed to be shown within the stupa. The substitution of Uṣṇīṣavijayā seems therefore to have occured at around this time for henceforth in all Lakṣacaitya paintings she invariably occupies the centre of the caitya.

Slightly earlier is a unique mandala of Sūrya, the sun-god (Fig. 82). A finely executed painting, it was obviously the model for the large number of Candramandalas that were painted throughout the fifteenth century. The principal differences between the two deities are of course in their complexions, Sūrya being red and

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[7] For a detailed study of this paubha see P. Pal, "Paintings from Nepal in the Prince of Wales Museum" *Prince of Wales Museum Bulletin*, 10 (1967), pp. 6-8, pls. 6-7.

Candra white, and in the animals pulling their chariots. Sūrya's chariot is pulled by seven horses while that of Candra by seven geese. According to an inscription at the back the mandala was painted by Kitaharasa on the occasion when one Bhisnudeveśvara performed the Bhīmaratha ceremony. Rather unusually in the central panel at the bottom surrounded by musicians the donor is shown seated on a lotus like a god. The paubhā of Amoghapāśa (Fig. 83) is of excellent quality and has some fine narrative panels around it, graphically representing edificatory tales extoling the merits of worshipping the Bodhisattva. The painting is as rich in details as it is sumptuous in coloring and may have been rendered in the same atelier as the Sugatisandarśana (Fig. 84). The central composition with the five figures remained a classic visual formula for most subsequent representations of this deity.

A slightly later and more elaborate paubhā than the Amoghapāśa (Fig. 83) portrays the Bodhisattva Sugatisandarśana Lokeśvara (Fig. 84). It is evident that in delineating all such images of Lokeśvara the artist simply employed the same basic stereotype such as the principal figure in the fourteenth century Lokeśvara painting (Fig. 77). This is true also of the female figures accompanying the Bodhisattva in all these works. The basic compositional formula, with the principal deities contained within a shrine, remains unvaried in all such paintings, except for the fact that the design may differ from one paubhā to another.

For students of Buddhist iconography the Sugatisandarśana paubhā is richly rewarding. The numerous figures represented in small compartments along the margins and on the panels below present an unusually large pantheon of Vajrayāna deities of a relatively early period. What is particularly noteworthy is the fact that the artist has depicted along the pillars of the shrine four figures of the guardians of the cardinal points dressed in the Central Asian-cum-Tibetan attire. These figures, Vaiśravaṇa, Virupākṣa, Viruḍhaka and Dhṛtarāṣṭra, are rarely included in Nepali paintings and they must be the earliest known representations so far. Furthermore, in the lowermost panel, scenes of music and dancing are here replaced by hieratic images of tutelary divinities. Apart from their iconographic significance, the figures in the margins offer a great variety of forms and postures which add considerable rhythm and movement to the overall composition.

In a painting of Vasudhārā dedicated in the year 1443 A.D.[8] (Fig. 85) we encounter a less rich iconography but a more decorative impulse. The composition is fundamentally of the type encountered in the Lokeśvara paintings (Figs. 83, 84), with an elaborate and intricately detailed shrine enclosing the luxurious form of the principal goddess in the centre. Especially appealing are the four delightfully obese yakṣa figures on either side of the floriate arch bearing sacks of gems to the goddess and thereby reiterating her role as the dispenser of wealth. The drawing is articulate and lively as may be seen from the infra-red photograph of the figures in the lower panel (Fig. 86). A slightly earlier and more elaborate version of this type of Vasudhārā painting is now in the Museum van Aziatische Kunst in Amsterdam.[9] The basic arrangement there too is of a rectangular shrine and the surface of the painting is teeming with ancillary figures of the pantheon. Not only do the figures strike a wide variety of postures and thereby animate the entire composition, but, diminutive as they are, each figure is drawn with unstinted fluency.

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[8] The dedicatory inscription is written on the back of the painting which is rather unusual.

Similarly hieratic but more animated than the Vasudhārā is the near contemporary paubhā of a dancing Mahāgaṇapati (Fig. 89). Stylistically the paubhā is so close to another mid-fifteenth century painting of Agastya (Fig. 87) that one wonders if both were not painted by the same master. The exuberantly delineated shrine of Mahāgaṇapati is surrounded by rock formations very similar to those seen in the Agastya paubhā. Alike also is the design of the rocks below the shrine in both pictures, while the same tonality of red is employed with equally dramatic effect. Indeed, the astonishingly bold use of the red figure of Mahāgaṇapati against a slightly different shade of red, a mannerism which was particularly favoured by Nepali artists and which they often effected with great finesse, is striking. Although the red is paramount, the palette is sufficiently varied to delight our eyes. Dominated by the intricate design of the floriate arch, the shrine is exquisitely rendered with an extraordinary flair for delicacy and refinement.

Aesthetically appealing as the paubhā is, it is equally exciting iconographically. Poised on his left foot, the multi-armed figure of Mahāgaṇapati dances with consummate grace and buoyancy. Not only is this a unique representation of the deity in Nepali paintings, but he belongs obviously to the Buddhist pantheon, as is evident from the inclusion of several other Buddhist divinities, such as two forms of Mahākāla, Jambhala and the four guardians dressed in the Central Asian attire. Especially charming is the depiction of the mahāsiddha Virūpā in the upper left corner. He is being offered ale by a seductive female as he points at the sun with his left hand to prevent it from shining. The form of the female figure, with her green complexion, is closely analogous to the figure of Lakṣmī in the 1420 Viṣṇumandala (Fig. 1). A richly robed figure seated with skullcap near the lotus throne is certainly intended *to be a Tibetan who is also a Tāntric adept. His presence indicates that the paubhā* was rendered for a Tibetan patron, but it seems incontrovertible that it was executed in Nepal rather than in Tibet. Most paintings rendered in Tibet by Nepali artists usually reveal certain iconographical traits which can easily be recognized as Tibetan.

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[9] P. Pal, *Two Buddhist Paintings from Nepal.*

Finally, a few words must be said about the exceptionally fine animal representations. While Mahāgaṇapati's rat is busy disgorging jewels, and the god therefore seems to be regarded here as a dispenser of wealth like Jambhala, the animal's form reminds us of a dog. Much more perceptive and realistic are the representations of monkeys, although their iconographic significance remains unclear. Nonetheless, they must have a precise function for several lively animals bring offerings to the god. Numerous others are distributed along the periphery of the shrine and are seen cavorting in a delightfully naturalistic fashion, reminding one of the behaviour of real monkeys at Svayambhunath today.

It has already been mentioned that several paubhās portray the mandala of the moon-god Candra, and curiously all of them, belonging to the fifteenth or early sixteenth century, are Buddhist. A glance at the three Candramandalas illustrated here reveals how close they are compositionally though there are considerable iconographical differences (Figs. 81, 96, 104).[10] The two fifteenth century mandalas are substantially the same, but the sixteenth century example has one circle of figures less. There are also other iconographic differences, but the overall stylistic similarity demonstrates how strongly conventional the tradition was.

The composition in the central circle of such mandalas is invariably the same; the bejewelled and crowned figure of Candra being larger than those of his attendants. A charioteer holds the reins of the seven geese pulling the chariot through the sky and Candra's two wives are engaged in shooting arrows at the demons of darkness. Those who are familiar with the medieval images of Sūrya in Nepal or India will at once recognize that the entire compositional scheme and iconographical programme are borrowed verbatim from representations of the sun-god. It is worth noting also that such images of Candra, while not uncommon in Nepal, are rarely seen in Indian art. As in earlier Central Asian paintings, images of Sūrya and Candra are often added at the top of Nepali Buddhist paubhās (Figs. 1, 77).

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[10] For another painting of the Candramandala, probably also of the fifteenth century see, P. Rawson, *The Art of Tantra*, Greenwich, Conn., 1973, Fig. 129, where it is mistakenly identified as a mandala of Sūrya.

रवि शाक्य

VI

Not all artists were strict conformists, and occasionally we come across a painting offering a refreshingly delightful variation both in terms of the composition as well as the overall design. One such example, probably of the mid-fifteenth century, is an elaborate paubhā in the British Museum (Fig. 92) portraying the Bodhisattva Nāmasaṅgīti in the company of a large host of divinities. Although strictly not a mandala, it is evident that the same underlying geometrical order characterizing a mandala was the guiding force in determining the composition of this work. However, rather than confining the figures within compartments, the artist has distributed them here over the entire surface of the painting around the central deity whose primacy is emphasized by his larger size. All the figures are manifestations of Nāmasaṅgiti as is obviously suggested by the manner in which they are unified by means of interconnected lotus stems which ultimately emerge from the central throne. Not only does this arrangement of the figures provide a pleasing visual pattern, but the undulating stalks of the lotus infuse the entire composition with organic rhythm. The sense of movement is further augmented by a row of engaging dancing figures immediately below Nāmasaṅgiti's throne. In defiance of all laws of gravity they strike arresting postures which miraculously convey both buoyancy and stability. The great diversity of colours demanded by the rich iconography of the painting is most satisfactorily harmonized into a pleasing symphony of radiant hues.

Another paubhā of unusual interest now in the Boston Museum (Figs. 106, 107) portrays the temptation of Śākyamuni. Although the composition is still guided by rules of symmetry and the focal point is the enshrined figure of Śākyamuni in the centre, the artist has created a sprawling composition without resorting to the more common practice of segmented compositional units. The result is a dramatically expressive and strongly emotional delineation of the subject rarely encountered in Nepali paubhās. As the surging masses of ogres, demons, spirits and mortals led by Māra descend upon the calm and unperturbed Śākyamuni from all sides, the viewer is graphically made aware of the relentless ferocity of the attack. As the poet Aśvaghoṣa verbalized the occasion in his *Buddhacarita*:

> "Then Mâra called to his mind his own army, wishing to work the overthrow of the Sâkya saint; and his followers swarmed round, wearing different forms and carrying arrows, trees, darts, clubs and swords in their hands; . . . .

> "Some as they leaped about wildly, others danced upon one another, some sported about in the sky, others went along on the tops of the trees; . . . .
> "But the great sage having beheld that army of Mâra thus engaged in an attack on the knower of the Law, remained untroubled and suffered no perturbation, like a lion seated in the midst of oxen."[11]

Most of the paubhās illustrated or discussed here fall within the category of religious paintings executed on certain auspicious occasions, such as the performances of religious rites. Others, however, were painted and consecrated for different reasons, such as the commemoration of departed souls. One of the earliest of such commemorative paubhās is the fragmentary fifteenth century example at Los Angeles (Fig. 7). A nineteenth century copy (Fig. 8) gives us a better idea of what the original must have looked like when it was complete. Here we encounter not only an altogether different type of paubhā, but also a different composition, in which the upper half depicts the divine world, while the lower half represents the terrestrial region where Vanaratna's wife is dispensing gifts to beggars and religious personages.

Another commemorative painting has already been mentioned in an earlier chapter. Although the painting itself is a seventeenth century copy (Fig. 9), there seems no doubt that much of it is a faithful copy of the fifteenth century original. It may be recalled that the original paubhā was dedicated to commemorate the performance of a secular rite known as Bhīmaratha which is observed by a person on reaching the age of seventy years, seven months and seven days. It is believed that by performing this ceremony a person not only absolves himself from his past sins, but also is no longer responsible for his future actions. Here again we see a curious admixture of the secular and the sacred in an unusual composition. The rite must have been performed along with that of Lakṣacaitya as is evident from the large stupa dominating the upper half of the painting as well as the numerous tiny ones represented along the sides. Within the womb of the large stupa is the image of Uṣṇīṣavijayā, as in other Lakṣacaitya paintings (Figs. 79, 100). Nevertheless the stupa is very likely meant to represent that at Svayambhunath for its disposition, along with the subsidiary shrines, is basically similar to that seen in a paubhā which definitely depicts the famous site (Fig. 108). In addition, the occasion of the Bhīmaratha ceremony seems also to have coincided with the raising of the large parasol at the summit of the stupa. Possibly, Prakulideva, in whose honour the ceremony was performed, was also the donor of this gilded parasol. As in other commemorative paintings, here too the paubhā is divided into two halves. In the lower section the old man and his wife are seated on a chariot and are engaged in worshipping the Buddha directly, who is distinguished by his nimbus. It is rather surprising that there is no attempt to make a distinction between the size of the Buddha and that of the couple on the chariot. This is a significant departure from the usual practice where the divine figure is generally portrayed as much larger than mere mortals.

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[11] M. Müller, ed. *Buddhist Mahâyâna Texts,* Delhi-Varanasi-Patna, 1965, pp. 139-140.

Another unusual paubhā is that depicting the restoration of the stupa of Svayambhūnātha (Fig. 108). Essentially it is a topographical painting delineating more than the restoration of the stupa; it provides us with a sort of bird's eye view of the entire Kathmandu Valley in a flat two-dimensional manner. The hill of Svayambhunath is symbolically indicated by a trefoiled nimbus of stylized rock formations, and the roads and paths of the valley meander across the surface of the paubhā like fluttering ribbons. The figures, shrines, trees and animals seem to be suspended miraculously in space where laws of gravity are non-existent. Nor is there any sense of scale and the stupa dominates everything else as it is the most important element in the paubhā. Obviously the artist made no attempt to create a sense of spatial illusion; rather he wanted his viewer to see and recognize the important shrines in the valley, which are in fact identified by descriptive labels. This simple function has inspired the creation of a delightfully animated design which is at once graphic and visually compelling.

In many instances a paubhā is more than an icon; it is a representation of an entire shrine or temple in two dimensions. This becomes clear not only from such paintings as the Los Angeles Vasadhārāmandala and the Boston Kinnarī Jātaka (Figs. 97, 105), but also from a number of later Hindu examples (Figs. 115, 116, 121). In the Vasudhārāmandala the representation of the Sucandra Avadāna begins at the bottom with the depiction of an enshrined stupa and continues clockwise, exactly as it would have been painted on the walls of a shrine so that the devotee could follow the story as he performed his ritual circumambulation. This may also be observed in the temple of Bāgh-Bhairava in Kirtipur or in the Taleju temple in the Bhadgaon palace where the murals are oriented in a similar fashion. With regard to the Boston paubhā it may be recalled that a temple with paintings of the Kinnarī Jātaka was built by a lady as early as in the Licchavi period and the murals there too may have been disposed in a like manner. Fundamentally the depiction of Kinnarī Jātaka in the paubhā is organized in the same manner as the stories in the Amoghāpāśa or Vasudhārā paintings. In the central section of the picture the enthroned figure of the Buddha along with two Bodhisattvas is portrayed in an elaborately arched shrine and is surrounded by several other divinities represented in a hieratic manner. Additional gods and Tathāgatas are included in the top register, while protective and tutelary figures and scenes of consecration with donors appear along the bottom. This basic compositional arrangement was followed almost rigidly throughout the history of Nepali painting. Variations are perceived only in matters of ornamental designs and in the manner in which the attendant figures are disposed.

The story of Kinnarī is depicted in great detail and each scene is identified by a label. Briefly the story involves a young prince named Sudhanu and relates his indomitable love for Manoharā, a kinnarī girl. After their marriage Sudhanu became so attached to her that he neglected his royal duties. Manoharā was therefore sent away to her native land in the Himalayas. The undaunted prince followed her there after having overcome many obstacles and was finally reunited with his beloved. There are two versions of this story in Buddhist literature, but the Newari rendering, depicted in this paubhā, seems to be yet a third variation which has taken on much local colour. Although the paubhā was painted almost two centuries after the 1367 Vasudhārāmandala, it demonstrates the essentially conservative character of the style. The story unfolds in successive panels in much the same manner in both, and the technique is very similar to that of a film or comic strip. Indeed, this particular mode of narrative representation was continued well into the seventeenth century, as may be noted from the Cleveland paubhā of 1649 (Fig. 113).

VII

The earliest example of a paubhā depicting angry divinities is that of the dancing Vajravārāhī (Fig. 73) which we have already discussed. Among later representations two of the most spectacular are from the fifteenth century and depict the important esoteric deity Samvara. In one of these (Fig. 91), consecrated in the year 1467, the god is represented in an unusual form known as Mahāsamvara. Obviously this is a more cosmic manifestation of the simpler image in the Los Angeles paubhā (Fig. 90).[12] Apart from the larger number of arms and heads, Mahāsamvara differs from Samvara in that his complexion is half green and half blue. In both paintings the god is portrayed as copulating with his female partner Vajravārāhī. Such sexual imagery is frequently employed in Tāntric Buddhist art to symbolize the supreme state of enlightenment (*Bodhicitta*). Many of the later Vajrayāna sects believe that *Bodhicitta* can be achieved by the combination of right knowledge (*prajñā*) with right method (*upāya*), usually regarded as compassion (*karuṇā*). In visual terms the male of the pair represents method or compassion while the female symbolizes knowledge or wisdom.

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[12] For a colour reproduction see, P. Pal, *Nepal/Where the Gods are Young*, p. 50.

Among other wrathful divinities frequently portrayed in paubhās are Mahākāla (Figs. 102, 103) and Acala Caṇḍamahāroṣaṇa (Figs. 109-110). Mahākāla is a Buddhist adaptation of Śiva as Bhairava and is a god especially venerated by Vajrayānists both in Nepal and Tibet. Regarded as the god of time and hence also of death, his habitat appropriately is the cemetery. A black dwarfish figure, he is always given a tawny beard and hair. Adorned with severed heads, a third eye and snakes, he carries a chopper and skullcup filled with blood. Not as awesome as Mahākāla, Acala is a wrathful manifestation of Mañjuśrī, the Buddhist god of wisdom. Bejewelled and diademed he carries a sword and a noose, and is frequently represented in a kneeling posture. Like Amoghapāśa Lokeśvara, the steadfast Acala uses the noose to catch wandering souls, while his sword cuts through the fog of ignorance. In both paubhās Acala is shown copulating with his Prajñā.

Common to all these paubhās of angry deities is the dramatic red aureole of leaping flames against which the principal figures are represented. Highly stylized and often appearing as découpage decoration, the tongues of flames are sometimes painted in red, and at others in diverse hues of red, yellow, green or blue, as in the Los Angeles Samvara (Fig. 90). The busy and tightly packed scroll design of the aureole offers a strong contrast for the principal figures with their deep blue or black colours, often highlighted by shades of silvery gray. Together with their dynamic attitudes, except in the case of Māhākāla (Fig. 102), the leaping flame motif makes the composition remarkably lively and spirited.

Usually in such paintings the enflamed field of knowledge is surrounded by stereotyped representations of the eight cemeteries symbolizing the phenomenal world. Each cemetery contains flayed bodies, gnarled trees, a river, scavenging birds and animals, one or more mahāsiddhas and one of the presiding guardians of directions. In mandalas (Figs. 93, 95) the cemeteries are commonly represented in the perimeter circle; in other instances (Figs. 102, 103) they occur in marginal panels, each cemetery clearly distinguished by bands of water. The painting of Vajravārāhī (Fig. 73), however, has no such cemetery, although a number of mahāsiddhas are included, and in the paubhās of Mahāsamvara and Samvara the cemeteries are crowded immediately around the flame-aureole. While the artist of the Mahāsamvara paubhā found himself with insufficient space and attempted to distinguish the different cemeteries by decorative bands, in the Los Angeles Samvara such artificial devices are dispensed with altogether, resulting in a freer composition of remarkably animated forms. In contrast, the central figures appear serenely detached even as they are assertive in their display of vigorous physicality. The innate calm they symbolize is contrasted effectively with the violently contorted and prostrate figures of Kālarātri and Bhairava below the feet of the strident god.

The Pan-Asian Mahākāla of 1543 (Fig. 102) is the earliest Nepali example of a type of Mahākāla representation which was particularly popular in Tibet, as we shall see in a later chapter. The 1577 paubhā (Fig. 103) is a variation upon the theme but aesthetically less accomplished. Visually more striking is a mid-seventeenth century example in which we not only encounter interesting iconographic variations, but a more lively composition (Fig. 112). Mahākāla himself is multi-armed and is portrayed in a vigorously militant posture. His six companions include two mahāsiddhas, Gaṇeśa, Kumāra and dancing gaṇas who play upon a drum and use skullcups as cymbals. Symbolically indicated by burning corpses, the cemeteries are separated by narrow strips of water and are only six in number.

One of the most striking Buddhist paubhās of wrathful divinities is an eighteenth century example (Fig. 122) in which we encounter a rich pantheon of Vajrayāna deities. These include a number of important esoteric gods such as Samvara, Hevajra, Heruka, Navātmaka Heruka, Gūhya-Mañjuvajra, Yamāntaka and Yogāmbara. The composition is dominated by three rows of nine gods of whom seven are shown embracing their female partners. Although the painting is formally structured, the aggressive attitudes of the figures as well as the flame mandorlas around them result in a bold visual pattern. Indeed, we cannot fail to admire the artist's marvelous sense of design, and the divergent colours of the divinities help to create a bright and vivacious surface with a strong emotional appeal.

VIII

With the continued decline of Buddhism after the seventeenth century, the Newars began to regard Tibet as their source of spiritual inspiration. As I shall discuss in a subsequent chapter, when Newar merchants returned home from Tibet they usually brought back Tibetan thankas. Nepali monasteries were no longer the centres of learning and religious fervour as they were in the centuries immediately following the destruction of the monastic establishments in Bihar and Bengal. Buddhism in Tibet on the other hand was enjoying unprecedented supremacy and, with the emergence of the institution of the Dalai Lama, church and state became inseparable. Inevitably therefore at this period there was greater demand for Buddhist art in Tibet than in Nepal, and the Tibetan chronicles make it clear how active Nepali artists were in the land of the snows. Thus, although paubhās continued to be painted in the Kathmandu Valley, the production was not as prolific as in contemporary Tibet. Moreover, there was a marked decline in the quality of the works, which is not unusual when a religion loses its vitality.

The presence of Tibetan thankas, particularly in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, exerted some influence upon the Nepali artists. By the seventeenth century Tibetan artists had developed a distinct tradition of landscape, and some of the landscape elements seen in Nepali paubhās of this period are clearly derived from Tibetan paintings. For example, in no paubhās of a pre-seventeenth century date do we encounter any indication of a sky, and trees are employed symbolically only to reflect an outdoor locale, particularly in the narrative panels. Even in those paintings (Figs. 78, 87) in which the subject warranted a greater concern with natural effects, the delineation of trees or rocks remained essentially symbolic. A distinct change can be perceived in the Cleveland paubhā of 1649 (Fig. 113); trees are added behind the figures of Jayarāma Bhāro and his family and stylized swirling clouds above reflect a perfunctory attempt to convey a natural setting as if Śākyamuni was preaching in a grove. In earlier paubhās rarely are there clouds above the central shrine, but in later examples not only are cloud formations frequently added, but also mountains with snowy peaks (Figs. 118, 120, 121), following a formula taken from Tibetan paintings. However, while in Tibetan thankas landscape is used consciously almost as a genre, the Nepali artists simply employed certain natural forms to create a background design.

Tibetan thankas were not the only new source of inspiration for seventeenth century Nepali artists. Sometime in the first half of the century, fresh artistic ideas arrived from India as well, principally through Mughal-Rajput paintings. In such pictures the Nepali artist also perceived a richer use of natural elements in compositions that are pictorially more varied. He lost no time in adopting the novel traits with characteristic ardour both for the narrative panels in the paubhās as well as for narrative scrolls, which is the subject of the next chapter.

A curious iconographic invention of the period is the frequent addition of royal portraits at the bottom of the paubhās. This is done irrespective of whether the painting had anything to do with the reigning monarch or not. For instance, the Cleveland painting of a preaching Śākyamuni (Fig. 113) was commissioned in 1649 by Jayarāma Bhāro when Pratāpamalla was king and there is nothing in the inscription to state that the monarch was in any way associated with the consecration. And yet, at the bottom in the third panel from the left, we see a formal portrait of Pratāpamalla. In none of the earlier paintings examined so far does one find the inclusion of such a specific royal portrait.

The exact reason for this iconographic peculiarity is not clear. It may be recalled that the Mughal court, with which the Mallas maintained connections, was inordinately fond of portraiture, a fact that may have inspired such an innovative and curious king as Pratāpamalla to introduce the custom. Or a clever artist may simply have decided to please his monarch by including a royal portrait and subsequently it became a custom. There seems to be some connection with the representation of the seven jewels (*saptaratna*) in earlier paintings (Figs. 74, 79, 85), for even when specific portraits are included usually the elephant and the horse (Figs. 9, 116), two of the jewels, are also added.

IX

Among the Buddhist paubhās of this period, one of the finest is the Cleveland painting dedicated in 1649 by Jayarāma Bhāro (Fig. 113). Rather than adhering to a symmetrical composition with the figure of Śākyamuni occupying the centre, as was the common practice, here the artist has placed him on one side. Moreover, instead of the usual frontal representation, Śākyamuni is shown in three-quarters profile, while his somewhat naturalistic posture, with the left leg crossing the right thigh, introduces an atmosphere of informality into the scene. Even more curious is the fact that he is engaged in preaching to Jayarāma Bhāro and members of his family who sit on the ground in two rows in identical attitudes.

The idea of devotees worshipping an image is not in itself uncommon, and in most earlier paubhās in which the donors are shown along the bottom, they are actually engaged in performing the *pujā* or consecration rites in front of several icons. Such an arrangement may also be seen at the bottom of the Cleveland painting; in addition, we find the donor's family in direct communion with Śākyamuni, as if the latter had physically appeared before them. A precedent for this may be seen in the paubhā of Tārā (Fig. 71), in which the goddess is actually shown blessing a monk who may represent the donor. A parallel closer in time is the paubhā recording the performance of the Bhīmaratha rite (Fig. 9), in which Śākyamuni is similarly engaged in communicating directly with Prakulideva and his wife, who are seated on a chariot. Furthermore, rather than the typical frontal representation, the three figures there too are depicted in partial profile. However, the stupa with the inset figure of Uṣṇīṣavijayā remains the focal point of this painting, whereas in the Cleveland paubhā Jayarāma Bhāro and his family share the limelight with Śākyamuni. It must be noted that while Prakulideva and his wife are of the same size as Śākyamuni, in the Cleveland painting we are left in no doubt of Śākyamuni's majesty and importance. It would be interesting to know whether the choice of the subject matter reflects the influence of the donor himself or of his preceptor. Certainly the artist alone could not be expected to conjure up such an idea on his own. It seems obvious that Jayarāma Bhāro regarded himself devout enough to receive the Buddha's blessings directly, and perhaps thereby attain freedom from the chain of rebirth. Significantly, the subject chosen for the marginal panels are Jātakas and stories that emphasize the performance of meritorious deeds in successive births which ultimately lead to nirvana.

Although there was no change in the basic function of the paubhā, the central figure now is not always given the same importance as in the earlier paintings. Doubtless the principal deity is still the focal point of the composition (Figs. 119, 127, 128), but no longer does he or she occupy the greater part of the surface, at least in eighteenth and nineteenth century Buddhist paubhās. For instance, in the 1744 paubhā of Vasudhārā (Fig. 119) the goddess is almost lost within her shrine, and both in this example as well as in several others, the ancillary figures or the narrative subjects seem often to engulf the central figure. Although the style is still figurative, there is now a stronger interest in natural forms or architectural elements which often inspired varied compositional designs.

In some instances (Fig. 118) the mountain motif occupies the entire background and the painting acquires a visionary quality with the figures floating against snowy peaks or against cushions of swirling clouds. In others (Fig. 130), only the principal figures are represented against a mountainous background, and an altogether novel composition is employed for a Lakṣacaitya painting dedicated in 1809 (Fig. 129). Here too the hill of Svayambhunath is represented, but how different the depiction is from two earlier examples (Figs. 9, 108). The Boston paubhā of the Piṇḍapātra Avadāna (Fig. 117) introduces us to yet another type of composition in which the artist employed a curious arrangement of figures and hills, apparently without any precedent. Almost a hundred years later another painter organized his composition in almost an identical manner (Fig. 127). In both paubhās the narrative subjects are portrayed in a curiously inventive fashion forming a sort of patterned border around the centrally enthroned figure of the Buddha. The framed compositions of the earlier method of narration, as seen in the Cleveland paubhā of 1649 (Fig. 113), are dispensed with, and the figures seem to overlap comfortably without the slightest concern. While the artist of the Boston paubhā has made some attempt to distribute the figures in different planes by means of hilly formations, no such effort is discernible in the later painting.

A totally different presentation of the narrative subject may be seen in the 1744 Vasudhārā painting (Fig. 119) or in the Amoghapāśa paubhā of 1862 (Fig. 131). In both, the stories unfold in horizontal registers in a continuous and uninterrupted manner as in the scrolls (Figs. 139, 141). The incidents are almost invariably portrayed against a continuously rolling hill painted usually in green. Streams, ponds, trees and buildings are used liberally irrespective of whether they are demanded by the theme. Indeed, in the almost indiscriminate use of such elements, the Nepali artists reveal an obsession similar to that of a child with a newly acquired toy.

By and large, however, the paubhā remained primarily an icon and its composition, therefore, always had to be guided by certain immutable laws of visual symmetry and formal certitude. The principal divinity in a paubhā could not really be removed from the centre without sacrificing his or her primacy. All subsidiary figures and narratives served to glorify the central image and their disposition also had to reflect accepted principles of geometric orderliness. Even when mountains and trees are added they are integrated into the pictorial field in a symmetrical and harmonious fashion and are really never allowed to overwhelm the importance of the figures, whether human or divine. On the whole, post-sixteenth century Nepali paubhās reflect a greater variety of forms and compositions and a stronger emphasis on natural elements, but few examples match the brilliance of colour and the delicacy of drawing that were the hallmarks of the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries.

Hindu Paubhās

X

I have already remarked that while Buddhist paubhās are plentiful, relatively few Hindu examples have survived. This cannot simply be fortuitous, and there seems no doubt that the painted icon had a stronger appeal for the Buddhists. In terms of style, however, there is little to distinguish between a Buddhist and a Hindu paubhā. Evidently the same artists and workships were responsible for both types of paintings, and the difference between the two groups is largely iconographic rather than stylistic.

The earliest Hindu painting to have survived is a rare though fragmentary mandala of the goddess Durgā or Mahiṣāsuramardinī (Fig. 75), whose cult is especially popular in the country. Nine images of the goddess are represented on the pericarp and the eight petals of the lotus. Except for their different complexions the nine goddesses are given identical iconographic features. Each is portrayed in a schematic or hieratic fashion, striking a militant posture as she slays the demon Mahiṣāsura. The nine Durgās are surrounded by the sixteen Mother Goddesses, placed at the points and interstices of an eight pointed star-like configuration which is the yantra or magical diagram of the Goddess. Several other divinities, including the eight guardians of the directions, are represented within the peripheral circle of the mandala as well as outside it. Animated figures of donors, priests and dancing musicians enliven the lower register of the painting. A comparison of these figures with those in the lowermost register of the 1367 Vasudhārāmandala (Fig. 72) reveals how stylistically close the representations are.

Paubhās portraying the Goddess, either as Mahiṣāsuramardinī or as the Divine Mother, seem to be extremely rare for only one or two others are known. A particularly impressive and monumental painting represents a Tāntric manifestation of the goddess known as Gūhyakālī (Fig. 124). Not only is the painting remarkable for its iconographic richness, but also for its strongly expressive quality. The majestic grandeur of the composition seems hardly to have distracted the artist's attention to details (Fig. 125) which are rendered with equal sensitivity and finesse. The monumental composition is handled with masterly restraint, and a constantly flowing linear rhythm unifies the innumerable figures into a coherent visual design.

A Śaiva painting of unusual iconographic interest and beauty is that which was consecrated around the mid-fifteenth century to commemorate the performance of *Agastyavrata* (Figs. 87, 88).[13] A Śaiva rite, it is performed in honour of Agastya, the legendary sage who is said to have introduced Aryan civilization into South India. Whether Agastya was a historical person or not, his deification here is given added emphasis with the provision of two additonal arms. Moreover, the sage seems also to be identified with Śiva, for his basic iconographic traits are akin to those given to Śiva's Dakṣiṇāmūrti images in some regions of South India. Unlike Śiva, however, Agastya is provided with a beard and is not given the third eye. It is evident from the surrounding rocky configuration that the elaborately arched shrine of Agastya represents a cave temple. Seventeen other sages are depicted within smaller caves and but for their complexions they are identical portrayals. Beyond the mountainous region and along the top of the paubhā are other divinities of the pantheon as well as the signs of the zodiac. Consecration rituals, ceremonial dances and portraits of donors fill the register along the bottom.

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[13] A definite identification of the central figure as Agastya has been made possible through the help of Gautamavajra Vajracharya, who kindly read the entire inscription. For colour reproductions of this painting, see P. Pal, *Indo-Asian Art*, Pl. 63 and *Nepal/Where the Gods are Young*, Fig. 57. In both publications I had identified the figure as Śiva, although in the latter I had also suggested that he may represent Agastya.

The most striking feature of the painting is the astonishingly inventive design of the rock formation which makes the composition unusually rich and festive. The abstract shapes of the rocks are accentuated by sparkling mauves, yellows, greens and blues. Apart from achieving a rich polyphony of colours, with the dominant note being struck by an intense red, the artist has made masterly use of delightfully varied shapes to orchestrate a harmonious visual pattern. At the same time he displays an equally lively interest in rendering details, whether of the draperies, the ornate shrine, or trees with delicate flowers. The rocks are enlivened here with gazelles, there with tigers, and elsewhere with cavorting monkeys.

No other early Śaiva paubhā has yet been discovered. Among the later examples, a particularly expressive painting (Fig. 114) is that commissioned by King Pratāpamalla himself in the year 1596, but rather curiously here the king's portrait is not included at the bottom. The painting is a typical example of the gay and vivacious style which developed towards the end of the sixteenth century. The predominant colour is red, and although the composition is strongly hieratic, the lively postures of most of the figures make the representation exceptionally animated.

But for a row of five seated figures along the top, representing five forms of Śiva and consorts, all the other divinities in the paubhā are shown dancing. The impressive central figure of Śiva dances with his right leg raised and folded and the left delicately poised on a skullcup balanced on a lotus. As he dances he copulates with his consort, who also is multi-armed like Śiva. Her red complexion is beautifully set off against Śiva's white, and but for a filigree-like bone apron which is hardly adequate to cover her buttocks, she is completely naked. That she is Durgā or Kālī is evident from the lion which, along with Śiva's bull, turns its neck adoringly to look at its mistress. A number of other deities, including the sixteen Mother Goddesses, Gaṇeśa and Kumāra, dance in striking militant postures in the side panels and along the bottom.

Apart from its iconographic richness, the paubhā is also historically important as it shows strong influences of Buddhist imagery. The entire central composition is borrowed from Buddhist paubhās, and although the idea of Śiva and Pārvatī copulating is not inexplicable textually, in art they are rarely shown in actual union. Tāntrism seems to have played a very strong role in Nepali life at this period, and Pratāpamalla was especially attracted by esoteric cults. Another equally impressive representation of Śiva and Pārvatī in physical union may be seen in a wall painting in Kathmandu (Fig. 126). Both compositionally and stylistically the mural is so closely related to the Gūhyakālī paubhā (Fig. 124) that the conclusion seems inevitable that they were painted by the same artist.

Of the two eighteenth century Śaiva paubhās one represents a rare example of a mandala (Fig. 123) and the other a temple (Fig. 121). Although the basic configuration of the mandala with its lotus remains the same, it is interesting to note how different is the design and decoration of this mandala from most other examples (Figs. 99, 101, 131). The form of the lotus itself reveals a curiously naive attempt at naturalistic representation. However, the painting is far more important for its iconographic characteristics than for its aesthetic quality. A detailed description of the paubhā will not be possible here, but a few interesting iconographic features are worthy of elucidation.

The central figure represents Śiva who is seated on two bulls instead of one. The depiction of two animals seems to be unique to the Nepali iconographic tradition as may be seen elsewhere (Fig. 121). The five heads of Śiva emphasize his all-pervasiveness as well as symbolize the five elements. More intriguing are four other manifestations of the god on four of the lotus petals. The dark ferocious image obviously represents the Bhairava aspect; in the white figure seated upon Garuḍa, Śiva is probably identified with Viṣṇu; and the half male, half female figure riding a swan may symbolize the creative aspect of the Hindu Trinity, usually characterized by Brahmā. The fourth figure, whose colour is red, rides an animal that looks like a deer or a goat. If indeed it is a goat, then perhaps here Śiva is being identified with Agni, the fire-god. Far more unusual is the inclusion of four ordinary mortals in the other petals of the lotus. All four are dressed similarly and each makes the same gesture of veneration with his right hand, but each is given a different complexion. They may portray four members of the donor's family, or, more likely, they are representations of the four castes. Immediately beyond the lotus are two goddesses along with Viṣṇu and Gaṇeśa and each figure is flanked by two Śivaliṅgas. Along the top are Sarasvatī, Lakṣmī and two Śaiva guardians protecting a dark liṅga, above which the word *kāsi* is inscribed. Obviously this is a misspelling for Kāśī, and hence the liṅga is meant to represent that which is in worship at Banaras in India. Immediately below the mandala several other Indian places of pilgrimage are represented symbolically and identified by inscriptions. These include Jagannātha, presumably of Puri, and shrines at Kanchi, Avantikā, etc. It is interesting that the temple of Viśvanātha at Banaras is given greater prominence than the local Paśupatinātha.

The finest example of an eighteenth century Hindu paubhā represents a group of Śaiva temples (Fig. 121). The greater part of the painting is occupied by a type of stone temple of which the seventeenth century Kṛṣṇa shrine at Patan is the most impressive example. The temple is placed in a hilly and wooded setting with other dimunitive shrines containing Śivaliṅgas represented against smaller hills. The images in the main temple are distributed in three tiers. The uppermost contains a liṅga with two attendants, the second has a mukhaliṅga in the centre flanked by two guardians, and along the bottom is a group of five remarkably lively figures, each with several arms and heads. The three in the centre represent three different aspects of Śiva; on the right is Gaṇeśa and on the left Durgā. The two figures at the two extremities are Śaiva guardians.

Paubhās with prominent architectural motifs seem to have been popular during this period, particularly with Vaiṣṇavas (Figs. 115, 116, 120); but for sheer beauty and elegance of design this Śaiva painting remains without equal. In fact, as the Cleveland Tārā (Fig. 71) is the finest example of the early group, so also this paubhā is an epitome of excellence among post-seventeenth century paintings. Obviously the entire composition is constructed architectonically with the successive layers of hills and bulbous trees reiterating the shape of the pyramidal structure with its domed pavilions. The linear severity of the architectural elements is effectively modified by the soft contours of the hills and trees, and the composition thereby achieves a pleasing and harmonious balance. The artist's penchant for bold and assertive shapes is matched equally by his love for delicate details. Unusual for Nepali painting is the striking use of silver paint for the principal temple which attains a shimmering quality against the mass of luminously red mountain. Other hills are painted in shades of blue-gray and green and are decorated delightfully with formally trimmed multi-coloured trees and flowering shrubs.

The earliest known Vaiṣṇava paubhā is the 1420 mandala painted and dedicated by Tejarāma (Fig. 1). A bright and colourful painting, the Viṣṇumandala is relatively less complex than most Buddhist mandalas. It may also be pointed out that generally no scenes of cemeteries are included in Hindu mandalas. In the centre the white figure of Viṣṇu is seated in a relaxed manner on a cushion formed by the coiled body of the serpent king Ananta, whose multicoloured, polycephalous hood serves as a nimbus for the god. He is accompanied by his consort Lakṣmī, whose complexion is green, and by his mount, Garuḍa, painted red. Twelve other emanations of Viṣṇu along with their wives are represented on the lotus petals, and several other divinities, including the eight guardians and Bhairavas as doorkeepers, complete the pantheon of the mandala proper. The more important deities such as Śiva and Brahmā, are portrayed in the upper register, while at the bottom Tejarāma with members of his family and a priest is engaged in performing the consecration rituals.

It is remarkable how crisp the delineation of the figures is despite the dense tapestry-like scroll filling the ground. Although Tejarāma was limited in his choice of colours by iconographic demands, his predilection for rich tones is evident from the gay dresses of the figures, as well as the textured quality of the scroll motif. Notwithstanding the fact that the painting is over five hundred years old the colours are astonishingly fresh and vivacious. I have already had occasion to remark upon the strong similarities between this painting and that portraying Śākyamuni and Nāgārjuna at Cleveland (Fig. 78). One wonders if Tejarāma was not responsible for the Cleveland painting as well.

Curiously all ~~other~~ surviving Vaiṣṇava paubhās belong to the seventeenth and the eighteenth centuries. Many of these have been discussed at length elsewhere[14] and generally they are of iconographic rather than aesthetic interest. Almost invariably the paintings depict either mandalas or hieratic arrangement of Vaiṣṇava deities enshrined in elaborate temples (Figs. 115, 116, 120). Their compositions, therefore, are characterized by a stern, geometrical formality, although one does observe an astonishing variety of decorative details in the overall pattern. In contrast to the Śaiva and Śākta paubhās, the Vaiṣṇava paintings always portray placid subject matter, and hence, the representations are not as dynamic. Visually far more exciting are the Vaiṣṇava narrative scrolls, which will be discussed in the following chapter.

[14] See P. Pal, "Paintings from Nepal in the Prince of Wales Museum" and *Vaiṣṇava Iconology in Nepal*.

CHAPTER FIVE

NARRATIVE PAINTINGS

I

We have already encountered the representation of narrative subjects in early manuscript illuminations. Apart from the succinct and symbolic delineation of the eight miraculous incidents from the life of the Buddha on *Prajñāpāramitā* manuscripts, a cover depicting the Vessantara Jātaka and a copiously illustrated manuscript of the *Gaṇḍavyūha* are among the surviving examples of early renderings of Buddhist narrative subjects. To this may be added the charming representations in the Hindu manuscript of the *Devīmāhātmya*, now in the Bharat Kala Bhavan.

Didactic stories are also depicted in the paubhās, more often in Buddhist than in Hindu examples. Although a story is often represented in great detail, the rendering is frequently of marginal interest only, since the composition in a paubhā is generally dominated by the images of gods and goddesses. Moreover, by retaining the diminutive panel format of manuscript illuminations in the paubhās, the artists have invariably limited the scope of the illustrations. Indeed, by comparison with the cover depicting the Vessantara Jātaka (Figs. 32, 33), where we note a more ambitious composition that extends along the entire length of the cover, or some of the more elaborate compositions such as the enlightenment of Śākyamuni on the Swali cover (Fig. 23), the panels in the paubhās are characterized by a simplicity more typical of modern comic strips. Rarely does each panel contain more than two figures; the background is always in red, as in the manuscript illuminations; and when trees, rocks or architectural elements are employed they are done so sparingly and with a symbolic intent rather than to achieve a landscape effect. Nevertheless, the graphic and illustrative intent of the representations is always clear, and the artists do not seem to have been much concerned with exploiting either the psychological possibilities of the themes or the dramatic potentials of the style.

Apart from such cryptic visualizations of narrative subjects in manuscripts and paubhās, there are other types of paintings which are devoted entirely to the representation of religious myths and legends. One type of such paintings consists of long horizontal scrolls or hand-rolls similar to Chinese and Japanese scrolls. Always made of rough cotton, such scrolls were painted to commemorate the performance of certain popular religious rites or *vrata*. Generally they were rolled up and kept in monasteries and houses and were brought out only on special occasions. In Newari such paintings are called *vilaṁpo*, but in this book they will uniformly be referred to as "scrolls". Sometimes a scroll is painted in one register (Fig. 162), but more commonly it is divided into two bands (Figs. 142, 145). In some instances the scrolls are remarkably long, as much as thirty feet, but they are rarely wider than two feet. In other instances (Fig. 157) the overall painting is given a vertical orientation like a paubhā, but the stories are portrayed in several horizontal registers. We will also see that this basic format of the scroll was applied to mural paintings as well.

A second type of painting in which narrative subjects predominate will be referred to in this book as *kalāpustaka*.[1] The term can literally be translated as "picture book" which in fact is what they are. The kalāpustaka (Fig. 138) appears to be peculiar to Nepal (perhaps also Burma) and takes the form of paper folios of small dimensions, rarely more than six inches long and three inches wide. Each folio is glued to the next lengthwise along the upper edges so that the entire manuscript can be folded up for storage or unfolded vertically like the bellow of a concertina. Thus, although the form of these kalāpustakas does follow that of a manuscript, technically they cannot be regarded as such, for the brief text appears only as captions and each folio is devoted entirely to painting, usually of narrative subjects.

A third type of narrative painting consists of a series of folios kept together loosely as in an album (Figs. 153, 167). Usually such paintings depict rhetorical subjects or Hindu mythology and are rendered in groups or sets, such as the *Bhāgavata Purāṇa* or *Rāgamālā*, so commonly encountered in the Mughal-Rajput tradition of India. Each folio is a separate composition and can be viewed as an individual picture within its own clearly defined framework. This type of painting was obviously introduced into Nepal from India, and while a few belong to the seventeenth century, the majority is from the eighteenth and nineteenth. Often the sets are relatively large, and each painting may measure as much as twenty-two inches wide and fifteen inches high.

Finally, there are murals in various states of disrepair and neglect, both in temples and palaces (Figs. 132-135), and the subject matter of these too is frequently narrative. Stylistically they are akin to the scroll paintings and hence only a few representative examples will be included in this chapter. It may be mentioned at the outset, however, that because of their indifferent condition and difficult accessibility they are neither easy to study nor photograph. The readers will, therefore, have to forgive the somewhat poor quality of their reproductions.

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[1] Such manuscripts are known in Newari as *thyāsāpu*.

It has already been pointed out that the album type of painting was introduced from India sometime in the seventeenth century. The earliest examples of surviving murals are not much older, although both from inscriptions and Chinese testimony we know that wall-paintings were common in Licchavi Nepal. When exactly the folding kalāpustakas originated is not known and the earliest surviving example goes back to the fifteenth century (see appendix). With regard to scrolls, examples are known from the sixteenth century, but judging from the representations of the Vessantara Jātaka of the twelfth century (Fig. 32), one may surmise that the tradition is considerably older. Because of continuous use such scrolls were easily damaged and frequently replaced by fresh copies. The older scrolls were then discarded or stored away in a forgotten corner of a monastery, and a patient search will no doubt yield a rich harvest of earlier examples. Such scrolls were popular in India until recent years and their history goes back at least to the time of the Buddha. The Buddha himself is said to have alluded to them as *caraṇacitras* and others were known as *yamapaṭa*. The former literally means "moveable pictures" and the latter "pictures of Yama".[2] Both were used by bards and itinerant storytellers who went about from village to village recounting their tales and sagas of ancient lore and mythology as well as of life in the realm of Yama, the king of death. To make the narration more graphic the bards would carry painted representations of their stories and legends which would be supported with bamboo posts. Similar scrolls may also have served as the visual models for the early Buddhist narrative reliefs at Bharhut and Sanchi.

II

Among the earliest murals existing in the Kathmandu Valley are those decorating the external walls of the Bagh-Bhairava temple in Kirtipur.[3] Unfortunately the murals are in a very sad state of preservation, and as they are totally exposed to the elements, it is surprising that they have lasted as long as they have. Strongly influenced by narrative scrolls the murals are organized in several narrow horizontal bands with the stories unfolding continuously. The subject appears to be a selection of myths and legends from the *Śiva Purāṇa*, but admittedly one cannot be certain about the identification. An idea of the style in which these murals are executed can be determined from the Manavināyaka scroll (Figs. 136, 137) which is rendered in the same basic style with exaggeratedly swaying figures and straight, slender, pillar-like trees, all of which appear to float against the flat background saturated with a deep red. The principal difference between the Kirtipur murals and the Manavināyaka scroll may be noted in the extensive use of a light though dense floral motif as the background in the latter. We do not know the exact date when the murals were executed, but stylistically they seem to belong to the end of the sixteenth century.

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[2] Coomaraswamy translated the word *caraṇa* as "good conduct or behaviour", but almost always when it is used as a compound with a suffix, it relates to feet. Moreover, words such as *caraka* (wandering religious students) or *cāraṇa* (strolling minstrel) are used in the sense of moving, and since such pictures were employed by wandering bards, I think the primary meaning of "moveable pictures" is perfectly suitable. The *yamapaṭa* relates more specifically to pictures about good conduct.

[3] Murals in a basically similar style also decorate the external walls of the Taleju temple in Bhadgaon. See, Pl. 132 and M. Singh, *Himalayan Art*, pp. 192-193, 207-209.

The Manavināyaka scroll is one of the finest examples of the florid Newari style of painting which seems to have become fashionable towards the end of the sixteenth century. A manifestation of Gaṇeśa, Manavināyaka's cult is peculiar to Nepal and an important temple is dedicated to him. The story unfolds with Śiva and Pārvatī playing dice on mount Kailāśa with Vaḍava watching the game. As he was a devotee of Śiva, Vaḍava cast a spell and Śiva easily won the game. This naturally enraged Pārvatī who laid a curse on Vaḍava; as a result, Vaḍava fell into the ocean where he was attacked by all sorts of sea-creatures. Several gods, such as Indra, Kumāra and Kubera attempted to rescue him but without success. Finally, Vaḍava performed a rite sacred to Manavināyaka and was thereby rescued. The subsequent scenes are not easily identifiable since the inscriptions are badly effaced.

That the scroll is rendered in the same basic style as the 1594 *Hitopadeśa* illuminations (Fig. 176) or the 1617 Rathayātrā scroll (Fig. 139) is evident, but it must be pointed out that the figurative types with their distinctive features appear as early as the fifteenth century (Fig. 84). The writing on the scroll is very similar to that of the *Hitopadeśa* so that a date between 1590 and 1600 seems fairly certain. The astonishing persistence of style in Nepali art becomes manifestly clear if we compare this scroll with the narrative sections in paubhās of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries (Figs. 97, 99). Indeed, the compositional mode and decorative motifs in the Manavināyaka scroll are fundamentally no different from those in the narrative panels of the 1367 mandala (Fig. 72); what has changed noticeably are the figurative types. The figures in the 1367 mandala still echo the sensuous grace and fleshy volume seen in earlier manuscript illuminations. In the scroll, however, the figures have large faces, ungainly feet and hands, and wiry bodies with little or no modelling. This type of figure seems to have become fashionable around the early part of the fifteenth century as is reflected by the females in the Sugatisandarśana paubhā (Fig. 83). By the beginning of the sixteenth century, as is evident from the Copenhagen manuscript illuminations (Fig. 39), the style begins to exhibit mannered qualities both in terms of the figures as well as the ornamentation. Altogether there is greater decorative exuberance apparent not only in the delineation of the colourful trees and their multi-hued rock bases, but also in the general use of a floral design as the background.

In most other examples of this style of painting, virtually all of which belong to the first quarter of the seventeenth century, the flamboyant and intricate vegetative ornamentation is employed pervasively to decorate the background. Apart from several Buddhist scrolls, three of which are in the Prince of Wales Museum in Bombay,[4] a certain type of kalāpustaka was also painted in this flowery style. Two of the scroll paintings were commissioned by a Kāśirāja Bhāro; one of them commemorates the car festival held annually in honour of Matsyendranātha or Bugmo Lokeśvara and the other illustrates stories from the *Kāraṇḍavyūha*. Among the kalāpustakas by far the most elaborate are an example in the Cambridge University Library and another in the National Art Gallery at Bhadgaon. It may further be pointed out that the *Hitopadeśa* and the *Pañcatantra* (Figs. 176-179) are also painted in the same style. The *Hitopadeśa* is dated in accordance with A.D. 1594 and there seems no doubt that the *Pañcatantra* as well as the Bhadgaon and Cambridge examples are of the same vintage, if not by the same hands. Both these kalāpustakas are of an encyclopaedic nature and include illustrations of sacred as well as secular subjects. Among the didactic subjects represented are stories from the Kṛṣṇalīlā, the *Rāmāyaṇa*, *Mahābhārata* and the Buddhist Kinnarī Jātaka, a subject of abiding interest in Nepal.[5]

It has already been emphasized that the background of these paintings is densely packed with florid ornamental devices which draw their designs or patterns largely from vegetative forms. The motifs are employed with astounding variation and comprise of both naturalistic and stylized floral elements, curving and convoluting with slender and intertwined tendrils, swirling rhizomes verging on arabesques and exuberant cloud or flame patterns. Generally, the motifs are rendered in various shades of red and blue, but occasionally green and white are also used in several combinations. This predilection for ornately rich background appears as early as some of the twelfth and thirteenth century manuscript illuminations, but there the depiction is characterized by greater restraint. Similar motifs were also freely though more delicately employed in early paubhās, but usually restricted to the aureoles behind the deities. It is interesting to note that generally in the narrative panels on the paubhās the background is painted either in red or blue and without any florid decoration. In view, therefore, of the ubiquitous use of this rich background in a restricted group of paintings, rendered between ca. 1575 and 1625, it may not be farfetched to assume that it is the hallmark of a particular atelier or that the mode remained in vogue for a relatively short period. In fact, although the Copenhagen manuscript illuminations of 1511 are painted in the same basic style, the background is devoid of any decorative device.

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[4] For a detailed study of these paintings, see P. Pal, "Paintings from Nepal in the Prince of Wales Museum", pp. 1 ff.

[5] For a more detailed study of the Cambridge manuscript and its style see P. Pal, "A Kalāpustaka from Nepal", pp. 23 ff.

Whether in the scrolls or in the kalāpustakas, the scenes are divided into separate panels in rather an irregular fashion. The division is achieved either by simple vertical frames or with trees which are used cleverly to separate one scene from another. In the kalāpustakas often an entire folio is given over to a single composition; hence, in contrast to the narrative panels in the paubhās, the compositions in both the scrolls and the kalāpustakas are more complex and include a larger number of figures. At times also the compositions overlap into one another despite the presence of a frame. Within each composition, however, the figures are arranged in a regimented fashion on a single plane with little or no attempt to achieve any illusionary effect of depth perception. Often also seated figures are placed vertically above one another like statues on shelves.

Apart from the florid background, the figures in this style of painting are represented in a distinctive manner. Characterized by unnaturally slim bodies they have remarkably thin waists and tubular legs. The feet, hands and faces often appear as disproportionately large and are drawn in rather a free but cursory manner. The faces are almost always shown in three-quarter profile and are distinguished by long noses, prominently looped chins and bow-shaped eyes with their ends projecting slightly. In profile, therefore, the further eye appears to protrude somewhat, but the Nepali artists did not extend it to the extent that it became a characteristic cliché in Western Indian painting. The postures are rather limited and when they stand the figures sway in so exaggerated a manner that one feels that a gentle push will tilt them over. As in the earlier narrative paintings there is an almost total lack of expression on the faces and emotions are expressed by certain stereotyped gestures of the hands and postures. For example, even when Vaḍava is attacked by all sorts of sea monsters (Fig. 137), he appears to be neither afraid nor intimidated, but only by certain movements of his entire body are we made aware of his predicament. Similarly, anger or heroism is depicted by the militant postures of the figures, and the asuras or anti-heroes are consistently portrayed with mask-like faces that are more amusing than frightening. Such masks were in fact worn by actors to portray asuras on the traditional stage, and generally it would not be far-fetched to say that the mode of popular theatre did exert a certain amount of influence upon the manner of representation in such scroll paintings. This stage-like presentation is further augmented by the suggestion of a curtain-like device employed in some of the panels and folios (Figs. 138, 141). This mannerism, too, is a continuation of an earlier tradition as it occurs suggestively on some of the manuscript covers (Figs. 25, 51), but the artists now often depict a curtain unambiguously, or they employ the trees in such a fashion that the intervening space between two trees conveys the appearance of a curtained background.

The decorative impulse remains strong not only in the background ornamentation but also in the treatment of the trees and architectural motifs. Apart from their use as frames, no attempt is made to render the trees naturalistically, even where they form an integral part of the background setting. Rather they appear as slender pillars, sometimes willowy and twisted in order to suit the demands of the composition, but generally straight and crowned with clusters of leaves of variegated design. The trunks, which often rise from bases of multi-coloured rock formations, are painted vivaciously with stripes of various hues. As always red is the predominant colour, but by alternating it with blues and greens, the artists have achieved a more varied and pleasing effect. Against the dense background of red, blue or green, the figures, trees, rocks or architectural elements, painted in red, green, white, yellow, blue or purple, appear fragile and delicate and almost assume the characteristics of découpage rather than painting. One can best describe the representations as charged with a sense of constant flux where everything is always moving in one direction or another. What is extraordinary is that despite this almost suffocating use of linear forms which are animated, sinewy and convoluting, the illustrations remain graphic, and the style achieves a rhythmic vivacity that is even sensuously appealing.

III

For some inexplicable reason no painting after about 1625 A.D. was rendered in this florid, decorative style. What is even more curious is that the next group of narrative scrolls belongs to the last decade of the seventeenth century and reveals an altogether different style (Figs. 142-146). Those who are familiar with the Mughal-Rajput tradition of painting in India will at once recognize its strong influence upon this particular style of Nepali painting, and in fact it would not be too inappropriate to regard it as the Nepali expression of the Rajput style.

There seems every reason to conclude that the Nepali artists first became aware of Mughal-Rajput paintings sometime around 1650. The evidence for this will be offered in the next chapter, but suffice it here to point out that in the Cleveland paubhā of 1649 (Fig. 113), while the figure of King Pratāpamalla is painted in the Mughal-Rajput style, the narrative panels continue to reflect the traditional Newari style as seen in sixteenth century pictures (Figs. 99, 105). The earliest known painting in which the Rajput elements are completely assimilated is the 1681 Vaiṣṇava paubhā in the Prince of Wales Museum (Fig. 115). Thereafter, in scrolls rendered around 1690 we find the emergence of a new style which is radically different from the earlier Newari style of painting.

In the 1681 Viṣṇu paṭa (Fig. 115) the story of Ko muni is represented in the upper half of the painting in four narrow bands very much like a narrative scroll and quite unlike the panelled representation of earlier paubhās. No artificial frames are employed to impede the continuous representation of the story. The trees are still decoratively rendered, but appear more integrated in the composition. The foreground is a continuous rocky surface, but the rock formations are totally different from the cube-like, multi-hued rocks of the earlier tradition. Indeed, the design for the rocks here appears to be quite unique and is used again, with slight variation, in a *Devīmāhātmya* painting of a somewhat later date (Fig. 152). In terms of the figurative types, as well as the representation of the animals, we encounter a manner of delineation considerably different from the previous style. The animals, such as the elephant, the horse or the cows, are rendered far more naturalistically, while the figurative types are more akin to those seen in Rajput paintings, particularly in the Mewar *Rāmāyaṇa* of 1649 (Fig. 148).

The impact of the Rajput tradition is more clearly perceived in the 1692 scroll of the Kṛṣṇalīlā (Figs. 142-144) in which the artist has illustrated the early life of Kṛṣṇa until his destruction of Kaṁsa, the tyrant king of Mathura. By comparison with earlier narrative paintings, the most noticeable characteristic of the scroll is the continuous method of representation without the restrictions of any artificial frames. The incidents are separated from one another in a subtle way by means of either architectural devices or by trees. Sometimes the trees do not quite function as dividers and several incidents are telescoped into each other with remarkable facility. For example, in one section illustrated here (Fig. 142), in the upper row we first see Kṛṣṇa destroying the demoness Putanā who had been dispatched by Kaṁsa to suckle the baby with her poisonous milk. Immediately following her demise below a tree, Yaśodā holds the infant in her arms as the family priest Garga performs a child-protective rite. This is followed in quick succession by the occasions when Kṛṣṇa destroyed the demons Tṛṇāvartta and Sakaṭa. Similarly, in the lower register on their way to Mathura the brothers transform the hunchbacked Kubjā into a beautiful woman. Then their arrival at Mathura is evident from the next two incidents in which they subdue the royal elephant Kuvalaya and subsequently the wrestlers, but the topography remains unchanged.

Almost invariably the background is delineated in monochrome, but red is used for the upper band and green for the lower. Against this flat background the figures attain clear relief, although they are placed along the foreground in a single plane and no attempt is made to achieve any spatial depth. Throughout the scroll trees are employed generously, and even if their forms are still stylized, they display a greater variety of botanical specimens than do the trees in the Newari style paintings. The architectural devices too are now borrowed from Rajput paintings and assume the forms of little pavilions with turrets and domes, within which one or two figures are shown either seated or standing. The trees are more convincingly integrated into the composition, and together with the flying birds and the floating clouds we are given a rudimentary form of landscaping. There is no effort, however, to depict a skyline or a horizon and the representation remains essentially two-dimensional. At times the artist has attempted to make a slight suggestion of depth by placing one figure before another or before a tree but without much conviction.

There are indeed few similarities between this style of painting and the earlier Newari style. The most easily perceptible difference is apparent in the delineation of the figures. No longer are the figures characterized by large hands and feet, broad faces with long noses, looped chins and bow-shaped eyes with extended ends. We now have a totally different facial type with wide open eyes shaped like lotus buds, the males frequently provided with beards, moustaches and sideburns. In the earlier paintings both men and women are shown naked from the waist upwards, but now they are heavily dressed. In fact, hereafter generally all males in Nepali paintings, with the exception of the gods, are dressed in Mughal-Rajput attire, while the women, including the goddesses, wear a short blouse to cover their breasts. The textile patterns are far more varied and colourful so that the figures appear to sparkle against the flat, monochromatic background. Apart from the dress, the form of the turbans too has undergone changes, and the crown or tiara is now used more exclusively for divine personages.

Although the impulse to present the figures with an aura of theatricality still predominates, no longer do they strike contrived postures with an exaggerated sway of the bodies. Rather, when they stand they appear stiff and erect with their feet firmly planted on the ground. The heads are now portrayed invariably in profile and the tendency to protrude the forehead slightly and afford us a glimpse of the further eye is dispensed with altogether. Sometimes the entire figure is shown in full profile, but the general inclination is to represent the body as frontally as possible even when the head is portrayed in profile. The faces still betray no emotions, but the representation achieves a greater degree of expressiveness because of a wider variety of gestures and postures. For instance, as the infant Kṛṣṇa destroys Putanā and the other demons we are left in no doubt of the agony and amazement experienced by his foster mother. Or again, although their faces are impassive, one is nonetheless touched by the poignancy of the occasion when Kṛṣṇa lifts Kubjā's chin and transforms her into a beautiful woman. Thus, not only do we see a more perceptive representation of the stories, but within his limited framework, the artist has attempted to create a more appropriate mood for specific situations.

Finally, while trees, rocks and birds were also employed in earlier narrative paintings, their formulae have undergone considerable changes. The trees are still conceptually rendered, but they are less columnar and offer a wider variety of foliage. The typical cube-like rock formations, employed almost unaltered for over six hundred years, are now replaced by new motifs, although there is almost no attempt in the Kṛṣṇalīlā scroll to achieve a landscape effect. Only an incipient predilection for a skeletal naturalistic setting is perceived in the suggestive use of green as the background colour and of the flying birds and floating clouds.

IV

The fully developed formula for what may be regarded as typically Nepali landscape is encountered for the first time in a Buddhist scroll dedicated in the year

A.D. 1694 (Figs. 145, 146). Once again the scroll is divided into two horizontal registers, and while the narrow lower register is painted in red, the upper register depicts the figures against a rolling mountainous background of a rich blue-green. However, it is interesting to note that this mountainscape is still delineated against the ubiquitous red background which may be discerned behind the slopes of the ridges. Nevertheless the artist has indicated a horizon, and the skies are filled with lazily floating clouds, either white or tinged with light reds and mauves. The mountain peaks are frequently crowned with jagged excrescences, often outlined in reds and blues and thereby continuing the earlier Nepali predilection for a strong, colouristic expression. From now on this mountainscape in different shades of green will replace the ubiquitous monochromatic background and will be a constant presence irrespective of the topographical demands of the story.

It has already been remarked that as a motif the uniformly rolling hill is really an elaboration of the curtained background which appears as early as some of the eleventh century manuscript covers. The general idea of enriching the narrative scrolls with natural elements was probably derived from both Rajput and Tibetan paintings of the seventeenth century. Certainly the forms of the clouds and of the jagged snowy peaks are adaptations from Tibetan rather than Rajput pictures. At any rate, once the rolling hill motif was invented and accepted, with their characteristic tenacity, the artists used it ubiquitously almost like a trademark, particularly in narrative scrolls. Moreover, the artists had no intention of recreating in form and colour the mountainous surroundings in which they lived. No attempt is made to represent, either realistically or in an impressionist manner, the landscape which they perceived constantly. Rather, the elements of nature are reintegrated into a picturesque visual design, and sometimes even the mountains are rendered in their favourite red, as in the Anantavrata scroll (Fig. 158). If the sky is indicated at all, it is usually painted in dark blue, irrespective of whether the incident depicted takes place during the day or night. When buildings are required to be shown they are simply superimposed upon the rolling hills, and no effort is made to relate them perceptually to their surroundings. Like the mountains, trees and rivers are also rendered as elements of an overall visual pattern rather than as parts of a landscape. For instance, in a scroll in the Prince of Wales Museum (Fig. 150), trees and flowering plants are suitably placed, very much like the figures themselves, on two levels but within the same picture plane. The idea of using such trees, shrubs and flowering plants derives no doubt from the Mughal-Rajput tradition, but scarcely with the same feeling for landscaping. Sometimes the trees serve as dividers,

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as in earlier Nepali paintings; at other times they seem to be used simply to fill space decoratively.

It is obvious, therefore, that although the Nepali artists eagerly adopted natural forms, which they encountered in contemporary paintings of both the Tibetan and the Rajput traditions, they did so with a naivete and a taste for the novel rather than with a desire to communicate with nature. Mountains, trees, clouds and birds enriched his repertoire, but the artist revealed no direct experience of nature, nor was he interested in recreating nature's various moods. The forms of nature are now more varied and their presence more ubiquitous, but they are still employed almost symbolically, as props on a stage where the figures have been frozen in their characteristic postures. While they do try to convey a sense of space, there is no feeling for spaciousness, and the total picture retains its visual coherence from the artist's innate and intense sense of harmonious design.

Once the landscape formula was established and accepted, the artists employed it with astonishing variation and inventiveness. Nor was its use confined merely to narrative scrolls, but was extended also to palace murals (Figs. 133, 134), manuscript covers (Figs. 45, 46) and paubhās (Figs. 117, 119). The imagery of the rolling hills was immediately stereotyped and employed persistently irrespective of whether it was demanded by the theme or not. For instance, while some of the incidents in the life of the Buddha may have taken place in hilly areas, for the most part he lived in the plains. Similarly, Mathura and Vrindavan and their environs are flat, and yet in the paintings the cities and towns are placed in a hilly landscape even complete with snowy peaks. Interestingly during the same period Pahari artists in the Indian Himalayas were following the same practice.

Apart from the introduction of such landscape elements, the paintings reveal a somewhat richer palette. Despite the preponderance of red, the artist now uses a wider variety of colours with greater assurance. Different shades of greens and blues are applied more liberally, but there is little or no attempt to achieve any tonal variation. Often clouds, trees and figures are accentuated by rich mauves, purples, browns and yellows which create a sparkling visual effect, but no effort is made to distinguish between light and darkness and within the picture there is no internal source of light. Rather, the surface is uniformly luminous even when ostensibly night scenes are depicted. The sun obviously shines perenially in the imaginary world of the artist as also in the habitat of his gods.

A glance at the few reproductions of palace murals included here (Figs. 133, 134, 160, 161) will reveal that not only were the murals executed in the same basic style, but essentially they are horizontal scrolls transferred directly to the wall surface. Typically the space is divided into long, narrow registers which are painted in the basic red or green. There is the same ubiquitous use of a mountainscape, irrespective of the demands of the story, and it seems clear that the same artists who were painting scrolls or paubhās were responsible for the murals. Significantly also the subject matter for these palace decorations are stories from the life of Kṛṣṇa or the saga of Durgā's battle with the asuras.

A similar predilection for transferring the format of the scroll painting or miniatures is evident in the murals surviving in Indian palaces of this period. The palaces in the Himalayan states or in Rajasthan are often decorated with murals which are divided into panels following the shapes of the miniature pictures, whereas in the temples and palaces of South India we frequently encounter the division of the wall space into horizontal registers as in the Nepali scrolls. Rarely in this period does one find sprawling murals with monumental compositions as was the custom in Gupta India. One wonders, therefore, how the Kinnarī Jātaka was painted on the walls of the fifth century shrine, as mentioned in a Licchavi epigraph. In any event, we would not be wrong in assuming that wall-paintings in the Nepali palaces and temples of the fourteenth century, for instance, were rendered in the style of the 1367 Vasudhārāmandala (Fig. 72).

V

Narrative scrolls continued to be painted and dedicated in profusion during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. A particularly lively Buddhist scroll in the National Museum, New Delhi (Fig. 151) bears a dedicatory inscription, but unfortunately only the first numeral is clearly recognizable. Since this is an eight, there can be no doubt that it was painted in the ninth century of the Newari era, which corresponds to the period 1680-1779 of the Christian era. Thus, we can be certain that the scroll was painted before A.D. 1779. However, fortunately the scroll contains a portrait of a king who is identified by an inscription as Bhūpatīndramalla. This monarch ruled the kingdom of Bhadgaon from 1696 until 1721 and hence the painting must have been executed before 1721. It is of further interest to note that the scroll was probably painted in Bhadgaon which is a predominantly Hindu city.

The story depicted is that of Śroṇakoṭikarṇa which is a long and involved tale of the Avadāna type. Śroṇakoṭikarṇa was a merchant who once lost his way in a forest where he successively saw three visions of persons who alternately suffered and enjoyed sensual pleasures due to their past actions. They all instructed Śroṇakoṭikarṇa to return to their villages and warn their sons and successors of their fate. Śroṇakoṭikarṇa carried out their requests and then returned to his own city where, hearing of his experience, his son became a monk. Thereafter Śroṇakoṭikarṇa too retired to a monastery. The story is delineated with a wealth of details, and it is interesting to note that as in the Kṛṣṇalīlā scroll (Fig. 142), the artist here has dispensed with the use of rolling hills. Ridges have been rendered locally where necessary in the same style as in the 1681 Viṣṇu paubhā (Fig. 115) or the *Devīmāhātmya* folio (Fig. 152). The representation thus attains graphic clarity and the figures stand out in distinct relief from the background. The architectural styles are both local and imaginary, and a wide variety of trees and plants have been employed with great decorative flair. Rather interestingly, towards the beginning of the scrool, where merchants are shown worshipping a stupa in the top register, they are dressed in Tibetan fashion.

Because of the similar treatment of the rocks, it would seem that the kalāpustaka illustrating the *Devīmāhātmya* (Fig. 152) was also executed at about this time, if not in the same atelier. However, the *Devīmāhātmya* paintings are notably different in other ways. The composition is also divided into two registers but by an undulating line which is intended to represent the rolling hills. The edge of this line has been shaded in a perfunctory fashion and tufts of grass rise from the ground at regular intervals. Thus, as in another scroll of about the same period illustrating the story of the Kinnarī Jātaka (Fig. 150), the division of the folio or the scroll into two horizontal bands is done more suggestively so that the action seems to take place on two levels. But whereas in the Kinnarī Jātaka scroll the figurative types conform to the Rajput conventions, in the *Devīmāhātmya* paintings they have a more distinct appearance. The goddesses are shown with their heads invariably in profile, but curiously, the faces of the asuras are depicted almost in full view. Even when their decapitated heads roll on the ground and blood streams forth generously, the scene is hardly horrific, and the faces of both the goddesses and asuras are impassive and complacent. There is no tension in the violent engagement as the goddesses move with inexorable certitude towards their enemies who appear almost as puppets as they strike stiff and disjointed postures. The artist also reveals a preference for muted tones in contrast to the brighter hues which are more characteristic of the period.

The full maturity of the landscape style was reached towards the end of the eighteenth century. Several scrolls (Figs. 154-159) rendered around 1800 not only reveal the astonishing vitality of the style but are remarkably varied and expressive. All of them depict either Buddhist or Vaiṣṇava stories; curiously, representations of Śaiva myths are conspicuous by their absence. In the majority of such scrolls the story is delinated in one or two registers, but occasionally in three or more (Fig. 157). In all these examples we encounter a further refinement of the style, and within the limitations of the pictorial tradition, the representation is handled with greater sophistication and finesse. Despite their uniformity of design, the paintings offer a wealth of fascinating details which are rendered with subtle variation from one example to another. In fact, no two paintings show identical mountain ranges, whether in terms of their basic shapes or contours. In some (Fig. 145) the mountains simply serve as a backdrop, in others (Fig. 157) the artist has attempted, no matter how naively, to impart a sense of volume by rendering them in more than one plane. The use of architectural forms differs from one scroll to another; some artists were obviously more fond of architectural elements than others.

The most conspicuous visual element in these paintings is of course the mountain motif. It moves with lyrical rhythm across the surface, thereby enhancing considerably the narrative flow of the representation. In some instances their precise definition helps to isolate particular compositional segments, although whether this was intentional or accidental is difficult to ascertain. In any event, the notably different use of natural forms in this style of painting becomes evident if we compare a segment of the Berlin Vessantara Jātaka scroll (Fig. 162) with the twelfth century representation of the same subject on a manuscript cover (Fig. 32) At the same time, the use of the mountain range cannot help but remind us of the basically similar application of the meandering vine scroll motif on the coping stone of the railings in the second century B.C. stupa at Bharhut in India.

An usually expressive statement of the style may be seen in a scroll (Figs. 154, 155) depicting a Buddhist story known as the Śṛṅgaverī Avadāna. The story is concerned with Siṁhaketu of Śaśipattana who was an inveterate hunter against the wishes of his queen. When the king died his wife became *satī* by following him onto the funeral pyre. Subsequently, because he had killed so many animals, the king was reborn as a buffalo, but the queen was reborn as the daughter of a brahman. One day she saw the buffalo in a forest and learned from a Bodhisattva that the animal was her husband in her previous birth. Diligently therefore she took care of the buffalo until one day he was killed by wild beasts. The lady was disconsolate, but the Bodhisattva appeared once again and instructed her to gather the animal's bones and erect a caitya over them. She did as she was told and worshipped the caitya daily using the two horns of the buffalo. One of them she blew as a musical instrument (*sṛṅgabherī*) and the other she used for storing water. Ultimately a handsome man emerged from one of the horns and married the girl.

In the two segments illustrated here we see the king in the upper register hunting and returning with a deer and a duck. In the lower register the griefstricken lady first watches the death of the buffalo and then contemplates the carcass. Especially poignant is the representation of the sorrowful lady within the pavilion and how expressively the artist communicates her melancholy mood simply through her posture. In contrast, scenes of violence are depicted in a serio-comic manner devoid of all tension and ferociousness one expects in a hunt or a deadly fight between a lion and a buffalo. Another striking characteristic of the scroll is the predilection for muted colours. The mountains are rendered in shades of gray and light green; the rocks, where they occur, are subdued both in terms of colour and design, and the two most dominant hues are a chalky white and a deep, crimson red. The figures are invariably painted in a light brown, and where other shades are employed, as in the trees or the dresses, they are soft and quiet. In marked contrast, the colours in the *Ekādaśīvrata* scroll (Fig. 156) are bold and assertive and dazzle the eyes with their rich tonality.

The muted grey background, instead of the rich green or red, also characterizes some murals in the Hanumandhoka palace in Kathmandu (Figs. 160, 161). The story depicted is that of the *Devīmāhātmya*, and very likely the murals were painted at the order of King Rājendravikrama Shāh (1830-1847) who had constructed the building. In a sense the story is particularly appropriate, for Rājendravikrama was forced to abdicate and retire to India. There is thus a basic similarity between the careers of King Suratha of the *Devīmāhātmya*, who also had lost his kingdom but regained it after worshipping the goddess, and the unfortunate Nepali king of the mid-nineteenth century. In fact, the representation of King Suratha in the mural (Fig. 161) may well have been modelled upon the likeness of Rājendravikrama himself.

But for the use of the subdued grey in the background, the colours are applied with the usual Nepali penchant for bright and scintillating tones. Particularly colourful are the rocks around the cosmic ocean, while the uniformly designed clouds of pink, mauve, orange or yellow envelope equally unvaried snowy peaks crowning the mountain ridges. The battle scenes, despite their patent theatricality, are rendered in a spirited manner and some of the animal representations are quite lively. The serene goddess, riding her snarling lion, which is given a white body but flaming red mien and wings, parades across the ground with effortless ease as her weapons pierce a demon here or decapitates a buffalo there. Blood flows in streams and sprays in fountains, but always in an orderly manner. Altogether, the remarkably expressive and vivacious murals exhibit almost a surrealistic quality in the curious way the buffalo jumps over a pool with drowning figures, or in the delineation of king Suratha conversing with a sage, apparently unconcerned by the acts of violence behind him.

The murals (Fig. 163) decorating a room in the Nautaledarbar of the same palace are rendered in a more conventional manner. The stories are from the *Rāmāyaṇa* and are represented in horizontal bands imitating the format of the 1805 Vasudhārā scroll (Fig. 157). Although the same basic idea of providing a rolling mountainscape, irrespective of the demands of the story, is persisted with, the artist reveals at least an awareness of illusionist perception. This is evident not only in the treatment of the sky, but also in that of the burning house which is made to recede into the background. The rudimentary use of perspective is further apparent in a scroll of the period belonging to the Kwā-bahal at Patan (Fig. 164). The subject matter of the scroll is topographical and we are given a panoramic view of the valley with towns and villages, rivers and woods, shrines and pilgrimages. By comparing this scroll with another topographical painting rendered over three hundred years ago (Fig. 108) we realize how painterly the style has become. The nineteenth century artist had obviously seen Pahari pictures of the Kangra school; he may also have been familiar with European paintings. But it is equally clear that he was not ready to rush to the nearest hilltop in the valley and start capturing the landscape he actually observed before him. He preferred much rather to recreate conceptually his mental image or impressions of what the valley should look like by incorporating the topographical highlights that were demanded by his theme.

VI

Divided as they are in two or more registers, there is no central or focal composition in scroll paintings, and the story unfolds in a continuous manner. Visual coherency is generally maintained by the undulating hill motif, and although one can discern smaller compositional units with some effort, the eye is intended to glide along in the direction in which the story progresses without viewing the entire picture as one all-encompassing composition. When a paubhā includes narrative subjects (Figs. 113, 117) they are merely subordinate parts of a single composition and the painting always has an overall pictorial unity. Seldom does one come across a picture depicting one or more narrative themes within a single composition which occupies the entire dimensions of the cloth. One such rare example is an enormous painting on cloth (Figs. 165, 166) which is impressive both for its scale as well as the sweeping grandeur and boldness of the composition.

The subject seems to be a water festival in the river Yamunā where Kṛṣṇa is cavorting with crowds of cowherds, cowherdesses, brahmans and others. In the foreground are scenes of conviviality and feasting where rows of guests enjoy a sit-down meal. The river is filled in the middle with gopas and gopīs who engage in watersports, while several boats appear to be moored along the left margin. In the top right of the picture and on the opposite bank of the river is a cluster of buildings seemingly representing Indra's palace because of the prominently displayed white elephant (Fig. 166). Six ladies arrive riding upon clouds and are received within the palace by Indra and other members of his family. The painting is framed by a floral border as well as the garlanded curtain motif along the top.

The focal point of the composition is obviously the river which occupies a large part of the surface. It is drawn wider on the proper left, obviously in order to accommodate the many boats, and becomes narrower to the right to provide additional space for the scenes of feasting. Considering the size of the rivers in the Kathmandu Valley, one must admire the artist's remarkable power of imagination. There is no use of a horizon, a sky or of light and shade, but the painter has admirably succeeded in providing a sense of spaciousness by separating the river clearly from the banks and thereby creating three recognizable planes. The view remains essentially panoramic and the figures are so tiny that the artist appears to have viewed the scene from a great distance, as if from a mountain top. Despite the scale of the work, he has delineated every detail with meticulous precision, and, in effect, the painting remains a more elaborate and gigantic version of smaller album pictures such as those from a *Bhāgavata Purāṇa* rendered in the same style (Figs. 167-169).

Dispersed now in several collections in Europe and America, the *Bhāgavata Purāṇa* seems to be the most ambitious album of such paintings put together in Nepal. While a complete inventory of the pictures was never made before their dispersal, there must be well over a hundred folios, each of which is a separate composition. Although the basic style remains the same, there are several interesting features which make this set stylistically unique. Curiously the artist here has abandoned the repetitive rolling hill motif so characteristic of virtually all narrative paintings of the period. Instead, the ground throughout is delineated as a slightly undulating surface of light green dotted uniformly with tufts of grass of a darker green. More intriguing is the artist's obsession with architectural forms which virtually dominate the composition. Frequently we are given a panoramic view of a palace complex in multiple perspective so that the viewer can observe at once several incidents occurring simultaneously in different parts of the building. Like the architectural elements, the figures and trees, always shown in neat little clusters, are employed with a similar penchant for vertical orientation.

This unfaltering devotion to architectural motifs as the central construct of each composition appears to be peculiar to this set of paintings and must reflect the personal preference of this particular artist. Like a Guardi or a Canalletto, he was obviously intrigued by architectural forms which he has represented with remarkable variation and imagination. Generally, Nepali painting remains predominantly figurative, but here the figures were seemingly added almost accidentally, while the artist delighted in juxtaposing the basically geometrical shapes of the architectural elements into exciting visual designs. At the same time, the details of the buildings are rendered with great care and attention and with a variety of pattern which could only be attempted in a painting. Along with the curvilinear towers and semicircular domes, these bands of intricate floral and almost arabesque designs considerably relieve the severity of the upright and angular forms. Moreover, each little section or patch has been painted in a colour different from that immediately contiguous to it, thus creating the effect of a patchwork quilt of bright and brilliant hues.

It will not be possible here to illustrate more than three folios from this remarkable album. In one of the folios (Fig. 167) the artist has represented a scene in Mithila when Kṛṣṇa comes to the rescue of Sudhanva whose horse has fallen wounded in the battle. The artist obviously was familiar with building styles in Mithila for he has shown a cluster of houses with thatched roofs characteristic of that part of the world. More typical of this series is the illustration of the arrival of the fish at the palace of the asura named Samvara (Fig. 168), Kṛṣṇa's son Pradyumna being hidden in the belly of the fish. The third folio (Fig. 169) depicts on the right Prasena arriving in a forest for a hunt. He is then attacked by a lion who kills Prasena and his horse and takes away a precious gem which Prasena was carrying. Curiously the sequence of events takes place from right to left which is somewhat surprising since the Nepalis write from left to right.[6] Although this folio does not exhibit the almost invariable architectural mass, it is painted by the same hand as is evident from the similar delineation of the ground surface, of the trees as well as the figurative types. Prasena's figure, including the form of his turban, along with the representation of the horse have their exact parallels in the other two folios. Moreover, though the artist has not employed any buildings, his composition is essentially architectonic and is dominated by the pyramidal rock formations in the centre in a manner very similar to the disposition of the buildings in the other folios. Naive as the representation is, we must once again admire the artist's delightful sense of design and his extraordinary flair for juxtaposing a wide variety of shapes into a coherent but luxuriant composition. In the exuberance of the rockery and the decorativeness of the foliage, we are reminded of the better known hunting pictures of the Kotah school. In no other way, however, are these paintings of the *Bhāgavata Purāṇa* related to contemporary or earlier Kotah paintings.

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[6] One wonders whether the artist involved was perhaps a Muslim.

Many other sets of the *Bhāgavata Purāṇa* must have been painted in nineteenth century Nepal and some of these must still be housed in unknown private collections. A few stray folios that are known reveal how amazingly varied the representations are despite the fact that the artists were painting in the same basic style. This becomes clearly evident if we compare two different versions of the same theme (Figs. 153, 170). Both paintings represent the occasion when Viṣṇu came down from the heavens to rescue the king of the elephants who had been attacked by an alligator. Both in terms of composition and the application of colours, the two paintings are notably different. The Royal Asiatic Society folio is characterized by a rather simple composition, divided into three irregular bands suggesting three different planes. The main action takes place in the central band of a deep Nepali red which enhances the dramatic impact of the representation. Curious is the depiction of the aquatic animal which is a fanciful serpent with eyes all over its pink body, rather than an alligator. In the other version we encounter a more elaborate composition and the action takes place in a dense forest. Although the artist does betray an awareness of perspective, he seems to have been undecided regarding the degree to which he should apply such techniques. Thus, the animals represented in the foreground are rendered diminutively when they should have been the largest according to laws of perception. The rest of the painting, however, shows a more conscious attempt at creating an illusionist sense of space, although the elephant king is singled out from the others not only by his size but also by his white complexion.

Closely related to this painting of the Gajendramokṣa are pictures from yet another *Bhāgavata Purāṇa* set in a private collection. The folio reproduced here

(Fig. 171) illustrates a few incidents from the early life of Kṛṣṇa. As we shall see in the final chapter there seems no doubt that the artist responsible for this series was directly modelling his pictures on Pahari paintings with which he must have been familiar. It is clear, however, that he did not quite understand the pictorial qualities of the original for he still displays a propensity to divide the composition into two or more horizontal bands, even though he camouflages his attempt with wooded groves and a more convincing spacial organization. Moreover, by tonal variations of colours he has succeeded in capturing a semblance of the pastoral ambience in which the incidents took place. Once again, however, emotions and feelings are conveyed mostly through gestures and postures than through facial expressions.

Finally, this chapter on narrative paintings may be concluded by mentioning a remarkable picture of Viṣṇu resting on the world snake in the cosmic waters (Fig. 172). The entire myth of the Kurmāvatāra and the churning of the ocean has been forcefully represented with great economy and striking visual symbols. A boldly imaginative picture, it is a strange combination of abstract shapes and figurative forms which almost anticipates the compelling images of twentieth century surrealistic paintings.

रवि शाक्य

CHAPTER SIX

SECULAR PAINTINGS

I

As is true with Indian civilization, so also in the context of Nepali culture one cannot easily distinguish between the sacred and the secular. For example, the two great Indian epics, the *Mahābhārata* and the *Rāmāyaṇa*, which are also familiar in Nepal, were basically secular sagas. But over the centuries both were expanded and embellished with so much ethical and religious matter that ultimately they came to be regarded as sacred scriptures or *dharmaśāstra*. Similarly, the purāṇas are encyclopaedic texts which contain both religious and mundane material, but are considered by the Hindus as primarily religious books.

All the arts in India, including literature, are said to have a divine origin; and certainly divinity plays a pervasive role in most fiction and drama. Even when a drama is concerned with a purely secular theme, the author unfailingly invokes a deity of his choice at the beginning. Moreover, the themes for the dramas are often drawn from myths and legends associated with divine personalities, while allusions to the gods are frequent in secular poetry. The same is true also of other artistic forms such as music and dance. Thus, just as it is difficult to distinguish between sacred and profane music, so also in the visual arts there is no stylistic difference between the religious and the secular. For instance, the same basic style of architecture is employed in Nepal both for royal palaces as well as for temples of the gods. In painting too we will note that even where the subject matter is purely secular the styles of representation are the same as those in religious pictures.

In contrast to religious or didactic paintings, the types of secular pictures are limited, consisting mostly of manuscript illuminations, picture albums, and portraits. The murals that survive in the palaces at both Kathmandu and Bhadgaon invariably depict religious subjects. The private chambers of King Bhūpatīndramalla in Bhadgaon, for instance, are adorned with life size images of deities. Whether some apartments were embellished with more profane subjects such as erotica, as was the case in some Indian palaces, is not known. Wall-paintings around the entrances of ordinary buildings (Fig. 10) are a common sight today, as was noted by Wang Hsüan-tse in the seventh century, but, like the palace murals, their subject matter is religious.

The rich corpus of inscriptions makes it abundantly clear that Sanskrit texts of the *kāvya* form composed in India during the Gupta period and earlier were well known in Licchavi Nepal. Most of the surviving manuscripts, however, belong to the post-Licchavi period and among these a large number is concerned with secular subjects such as romances, poetry, erotics, rhetoric, etc. It is surprising though, that even when some of these texts, especially romances and dramas, are ideally suited for illustration, almost none is. With one exception, a small cover now in the Neotia collection in Calcutta (Figs. 173-175), all illuminated manuscripts of secular works belong to the late Malla period.

II

Rendered in the Monastic style, this unique cover consists of one composition depicting a forest scene. The luxuriance of the forest or a wooded grove is indicated by tall plantain trees and a palm, around which climb meandering creepers; a few animals, probably deer, are also included. From the left a princely figure, led by an ugly dwarfish creature, is seen approaching a rocky platform framed by the two upright plantain trees. On this platform a beautiful and fair lady strikes a provocative posture with her left leg stretched out fully while the right is folded at the knee. Both arms are raised above her head, the left fully extended and the right grasping the left wrist. She is accompanied by two attendants, one of whom is somewhat older and pensive, while the other seemingly offers her mistress a fish.

It is difficult to identify the scene precisely; that it represents a secular rather than a religious story seems evident from the absence of any halo behind the heads of the two principal figures. Several possibilities come to mind such as the episode from the *Mahābhārata* in which Śāntanu approches Satyavatī, the beautiful daughter of a fisherman; or less likely Rāvaṇa in the *Rāmāyaṇa* approaching Sītā in the forest; or again Duṣyanta approaching Śakuntalā in Kālidāsa's drama *Abhijñāna-Śakuntalam.* For one reason or another none of these suggestions altogether fits the iconography, and it is not impossible that the subject illustrates a *Jātaka* or an *Avadāna.* One of the maids holds a fish which could be of some significance and may identify the lady as Satyavatī or Matsyagandhā. On the other hand, there is also a strong possibility that we are watching Duṣyanta approaching Śakuntalā, accompanied by her two favourite maids, Anusūyā and Priyaṁbadā, although neither was old or ugly.

The style of representation is similar to that of the Vessantara Jātaka (Fig. 32), but the expression here is even more dramatic. The ugly dwarf leading the princely figure is very likely a court jester (*viduṣaka*) and by exaggerating his gestures and antics the artist has expressed his personality very effectively. Equally forceful is the representation of the petulant heroine who seems to have flung her scarf behind her. The turn of her head has just the right touch of arrogance, while the elderly companion's facial expression and gesture seem to express her exasperation at her mistress' mood. Indeed, such a perceptive delineation of the psychological nuances of an incident is rather rare in Nepali painting, and we seem to be watching a dramatic performance. The gestures and attitudes of the figures reflect stylized animation and the heroine's pose is clearly drawn from the dancer's repertoire.

No other document of early Nepali secular painting is known. It may not be unreasonable to assume, however, that both the Licchavi and the early Malla palaces were decorated with murals, but as with later palaces, the subject matter must have been primarily religious. Although a large quantity of manuscripts of secular texts have survived, these do not seem to contain any illumination. As we mentioned earlier, it was customary to decorate religious texts with images which were believed to protect the manuscript, but obviously no such compulsion was felt to provide secular books with illustrations. In any event, if such texts had been illuminated we can be certain that the pictures would have been rendered very much in the manner of the manuscript cover just discussed or the *Gaṇḍavyūha* illustrations (Figs. 34-36).

III

This is also evident from the earliest indubitable examples of illuminated secular texts dating from the end of the sixteenth century. The best known is the *Hitopadeśa* manuscript in the National Library in Kathmandu bearing a date corresponding to A.D. 1594 (Fig. 176).[1] A second example, rendered in the same style, is of the *Pañcatantra* (Fig. 177). In the previous chapter we have already alluded to two other kalāpustakas (Figs. 178-179) containing illustrations of both secular and religious subjects. Among the secular themes depicted are stories from the *Vetālapañcaviṁśati* and the *Aśvaśāstra*, which is a veterinarian text about horses. The ornate style in which these pictures are painted has been discussed at length in the previous chapter. We will restrict ourselves here simply to a description of the subject matter of the folios reproduced.

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[1] For a colour reproduction see, S. Kramrisch, *The Art of Nepal*, p. 96.

The three leaves of the *Hitopadeśa* (Fig. 176) illustrate two well-known stories, one concerning a vulture and a cat and the other a jackal and a deer. In the top folio a cat is seen befriending an old and blind vulture who acts as a baby-sitter for young birds in exchange for his food. By flattery the cat wins the confidence of the vulture and climbing up the tree devours all the chicks. The artist has shown us the cat climbing the tree, attacking the birds, and then tearing one apart on the ground as the helpless blind vulture sits unaware of his friend's insidiousness. The cat then leaves, and in a single composition on the next folio, the tragedy is heightened by the infuriated parent birds killing the old vulture.

The second story concerns a jackal who befriends a deer with the intention of eating his tender flesh. The jackal lures the deer to a cornfield well aware that the farmer will set a trap and the deer will be caught and killed. In the section illustrated here we first see the jackal leading the gullible deer to the field and the farmers setting the trap. This story, however, has a happy ending. After being trapped, the deer pretends to be dead when the farmers reappear, and, as they release the trap, he jumps up and runs away, much to the disappointment of the devious and greedy jackal.

In the folio form the *Pañcatantra* (Fig. 177) is depicted the story of Prāptavyārtha who rides a white horse and arrives before a princess seated on a balcony. The disposition of Prāptavyārtha's arms across his chest (*vinayahasta*) may indicate his humble attitude or his disappointment, for apparently he was not the man invited by the princess. Nevertheless in the next composition we see the princess approaching him in a bedchamber.

Among the more interesting details in such illuminations is the constant presence of the lotus petal motif along the bottom alternately painted in red, blue and green. Although the subject matter is secular, obviously the artist was more accustomed to drawing religious pictures in which the deities are almost always placed upon lotuses. Moreover, in this style of painting no attempt is made at naturalistic representation. The trees are delightfully decorative and the animals and birds are rendered with naiveté and with almost child-like conceptualization. Indeed, the artists' unfamiliarity with animal forms and his insistence upon a steretoyped formula become evident from the delineation of the horses in the Cambridge kalāpustaka (Fig. 179). Although a label below each horse clearly identifies it as representing a distinct type, the artist has made no attempt to differentiate them. Similarly only a few spots distinguish the cat from the jackal in the *Hitopadeśa* manuscript. The strongly formal and decorative qualities of these late sixteenth century paintings become manifestly clear if we look at the depiction of hunting and dancing scenes in another folio from the Cambridge kalāpustaka (Fig. 178). Especially comical is the elephant fight directly above the dancers and musicians without any concern for optical veracity. A comparison between the elephants in the kalāpustaka and that of the Vessantara Jātaka (Fig. 32) reveals how adept the earlier artist was in drawing animals. The painters of the kalāpustaka or the *Hitopadeśa,* on the other hand, were rather unsure and do not appear to have modelled their animals from life.

I have repeatedly stressed that in depicting narrative subjects, both sacred and secular, the artists seem to have been strongly influenced by what they perceived on the stage. This is nowhere more apparent than on a manuscript cover representing unquestionably a secular subject (Fig. 180). The outside of the cover is decorated with a beautiful floral design consisting of a meandering stem forming medallions which enclose what appear to be stylized lotuses. On the inside is a row of eight figures of unusual interest, each of which is identified by an inscription. The main figure is the *sūtradhāra*, who is the stage manager or principal actor who superintends the whole performance. He is flanked by two *pārśvapātras* or assistants, who are also known in Sanskrit drama as *pāripārśvika*. One of them holds a staff and the other a waterpot. The three further figures on the sūtradhāra's right are identified from right to left as *mārddangika, svarakarttā* and *vetrapāla*. A *mārddangika* obviously is a drummer as is clear from his representation; the *svarakarttā* is the cymbals player, while the *vetrapāla*, literally meaning a cane-bearer, is probably a doorkeeper or keeper of the stage. The two musicians at the ends are referred to as a *tantrī* or the string-player and as a *gāyan* or singer.

The cover clearly depicts the typical opening scene of a dramatic performance when the sūtradhāra ceremoniously introduces the play. The crowned head of the sūtradhāra probably indicates that he is playing the role of a king or a god. His eminence is also emphasized by his position immediately before the colourful curtain. Traditionally such dramas were performed on improvised stages in the open air, and interestingly, the artist has framed his row of figures with two trees. All the figures are dressed in the Rajput mode which had become fashionable in the valley by the mid-seventeenth century. The flowery plants, placed incongruously between the shoulders of some of the figures, are adopted directly from contemporary Indian pictures. Against the dark background, the figures obtain remarkable plasticity, as if they were illuminated only by the footlights on an otherwise dark stage. The outlines are delineated with precision and fluency, and the variety of postures make the representation particularly lively.

It becomes clear once again that the style of painting had little or nothing to do with the sacred or secular character of the subject matter. It may be recalled that musicians playing drums, cymbals and horns, are frequently included in religious paintings (Figs. 72, 74, 75). There too we see them striking patently theatrical attitudes and obviously the same musicians performed for temples as well as the stage. As pointed out earlier it is clear why authors of texts on techniques of painting emphasized that the artist should be thoroughly familiar with the art of dance-drama. The postures of the figures as well as the gestures of the sūtradhāra's hands on this unique cover are no different from those which are employed for representations of divine characters in religious paintings.

IV

The most important document of secular painting to have emerged so far, and related stylistically to the cover just discussed, is a complete album depicting the thirty-six musical modes (*rāga* and *rāgiṇī*) along with eight conventional heroines (*nāyikā*). A basic musical mode is known as *rāga* and all variations derived from it are called *rāgiṇī*. The Indian mind has always displayed a tendency to personify abstract concepts, and the rāgas and rāgiṇīs provided the poets with an excellent genre. Each rāga or rāgiṇī expresses a human situation which makes it easy for the poet to ascribe to it qualities derived from the whole range of human experience. The couplets composed by the poet to define the characteristics of a rāga or rāgiṇī not only reflect human emotions appropriate to the musical qualities of the modes, but resulted in the personification of the musical mode itself. The word *rāga* being of the masculine gender, usually a rāga is personified as a male, whereas the rāgiṇī is personified as a female as it is a word of the feminine gender. The abstract musical mode is thus first translated into verbal imagery which is then taken up by the artist and given a more tangible and visual form.

The Rāgamālā album discussed here is the first such example to be discovered in Nepal. Each picture is provided at the top with a couplet describing the nāyikā, the rāga, or the rāgiṇī painted below. On an average each painting measures about seven and a half by five and a half inches. Interesting though the entire set is, it will not be possible here to describe or illustrate all the charming pictures. We shall confine our discussion to one Nāyikā and two Rāgamālā paintings which are iconographically unusual and aesthetically exciting.

The picture of the Nāyikā (Fig. 181) portrays Abhisārikā who is described as a woman burning with the fever of love. Impatient and somewhat bold, she ventures forth herself in search of her lover. In the Indian tradition, this subject is usually rendered with considerable dramatic flair, but the unknown Nepali artist has given us a rather quiet version. The simple composition is dominated by a typical Nepali building from which the heroine has just emerged. The stylized cloud in the sky probably symbolized the dark and stormy night, which is usual for this theme, although the verse in this instance does not refer to it.

Of the thirty-six Rāgamālā pictures I have selected two atypical examples as they reveal the uniqueness of this particular tradition. One of the paintings (Fig. 182) depicts a rāgiṇī addressed as *kocakarī*, a name not encountered in known Indian Rāgamālā traditions. The verse states that Kocakarī rāgiṇī has a fair complexion, plays a flute and makes her beloved dance on the summit of a mountain. The name probably derives from the word *cakorī*, the female of a species of bird well known in Indian literature for its amorous inclination. Indeed, love seems to be the central theme of this rāgiṇī in which the lovers cavort like a pair of cakora birds. It may be noted that although the poem describes Kocakarī as fair, the artist has given her a dark complexion while the dancer is made fair.

The second picture portrays Mallāra (Fig. 183) which is a common mode in the North Indian traditions. A number of variations of this particular rāga are known as Meghamallāra, Setamallāra and Gauḍamallāra. Sometimes it is personified as a male and at other times as a female, but it is almost invariably associated with the rainy season. In the verse above this painting the poet has characterized Mallāra as an ascetic with white hair and complexion, long ears and wearing a loin cloth, and he is said to be fond of roaming. The word *mallāra* is associated with Mallāri, a synonym of Śiva as the destroyer of a demon named Malla, and the description obviously fits a Śaiva ascetic. The artist has given us a rather perceptive portrayal of such a figure, with a somewhat emaciated body revealing the principal veins in his arms and legs. His gray beard, long hair and disproportionately elongated legs and arms add to his rather macabre appearance and his attitude characterizes him as a wanderer.

Although the album does not bear a date, it seems certain that it was painted around the mid-seventeenth century. The paleography of the script is slightly later than that of the 1594 *Hitopadeśa* manuscript (Fig. 76) and is almost identical to that of the 1649 Cleveland painting (Fig. 113). I have suggested elsewhere that this lavish set of paintings was very likely a royal commission and may have been done for two mid-seventeenth century kings who were especially fond of the arts.[2] One of them was Pratāpamalla of Kathmandu and the other Jagatprakāśamalla of Bhadgaon. Both assumed the title of *kavīndra* or king of poets, but the latter was far more creative and literate than the former. Indeed, during the reign of Jagatprakāśa (1644-1673) and ~~his grand~~father Jagajjyotirmalla (1613-1637) Bhadgaon must have been a haven for poets and musicians. Both kings were avid patrons of music and were deeply interested in musicology, for both are credited with having written several books on music and lyrical poetry. Jagatprakāśa's interest in music led him to assume the title of *gandharvavidyāguru* or the master of musical science.[3] I am, therefore, inclined to suggest that the Rāgamālā under discussion was prepared for this royal patron of music.

The distinctive style of the Rāgamālā and Nāyikā pictures becomes evident if we compare them with either the 1649 Cleveland paubhā (Fig. 113) or the Rajput style scrolls of the end of the century (Figs. 142-146). There is no doubt that the paintings are generally influenced by Rajput pictures, probably of a Rajasthani rather than a Pahari school. But no particular school can be regarded as the exact source of the Nepali style. I have elsewhere suggested that one strong possibility is the Mewar school for some similarities with the 1605 Chawand Rāgamālā set can be discerned.[4] But fundamentally the Nepali artist responsible for the album was a strong individualist who probably did see a Rajasthani Rāgamālā set but borrowed only in a selective and limited fashion. The iconography of the various musical modes is often original, and generally the colours have very little in common with either seventeenth century Rajput paintings or with contemporary Nepali paubhās. The paint has a peculiarly varnished quality and the background often seems to be speckled with silver or mica dust so that the pictures acquire a shimmering effect.

It also seems beyond question that the artist was primarily used to painting religious pictures, for although he was not afraid to adopt new ideas, he could not give up his conventional mode altogether. In each of the Rāgamālā pictures the upper part has been framed by a trefoiled arch which seems to be derived from aureoles seen frequently in religious paintings. Furthermore, each composition is provided with a lotus base at the bottom, exactly as in the near contemporary painting of Brahmā (Fig. 184). It may also be pointed out that several Nāyikā paintings are embellished with a curtain similar to those in several mid-seventeenth century paintings (Figs. 114, 180). Finally, for the Bhairava rāga the artist has literally copied a typically Nepali image of the god Bhairava, which demonstrates quite convincingly that he was a painter of religious icons and that executing a Rāgamālā album was a new artistic adventure for him.

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[2] See, P. Pal, "Eight Heroines from Nepal", pp. 58 ff.

[3] See also D. Shimkhada, "Nepali Paintings and the Rajput Style", pp. 38 ff.

[4] Pal, *op. cit.*, p. 61.

The only other known pictures of secular subjects, apart from portraits, are concerned with erotica. We know that erotic subjects were popular with kings, and Jagajjyotirmalla himself wrote a commentary on the *Kāmasūtra*.[5] One could hardly expect him not to have had an illustrated copy of the text, but so far none has come to light. An album, now dispersed in various collections, may have been made for one of his successors, and a typical picture from it is reproduced here (Fig. 186).[6] Among the least daring of such illustrations, it shows a couple copulating in a seated position on a bed within a pavilion. Several other examples of such erotic pictures are known and the subject was obviously quite popular, possibly among the aristocracy.

V

The remaining secular paintings consist of portraits. Portraiture has an old tradition in Nepal going back certainly to the Licchavi period. The earliest painted portraits possibly occur on a twelfth century *Śivadharma* cover (Fig. 52) where the bearded man and his wife may represent the couple who commissioned the manuscript. Generally, however, no portraits of donors are found in manuscripts or on their covers, but the venerable gentleman with the flowing, white beard and a receding forehead on the *Śivadharma* cover seems too much of an individual despite the idealized representation. Not only does he appear to be a dignified man, but the fine clothes he dons indicate that he was a person of some substance.

More frequently representations of donors are encountered in paubhās, and inscriptions often provide us with their names. But rarely are the depictions realistic, and certain conventional formulae were repeated over and over again throughout the ages. None of the three early paubhās (Figs. 68, 70, 71) contains any portraits of donors in the same way that subsequent paintings do. In the Cleveland paubhā of Tārā (Fig. 71) we see a monk seated below the right hand of the goddess, evidently receiving her blessings. This could, of course, be a portrait of the patron, but the depiction is far too idealized and no individual features of the face can be recognized.

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[5] For a discussion of the literary talents of the Malla kings see, D. R. Regmi, *Medieval Nepal*, II, pp. 833 ff.

[6] For several other folios see, *Tantra*, Hayward Gallery Exhibition Catalogue, London, 1971, pp. 29-30.

Figures of donors along with members of their family are usually represented at the bottom of a paubhā as we have previously mentioned. The formula is already well established in the 1367 Vasudhārāmandala (Fig. 72); in later examples only the number of figures seems to increase, apart from changes in the attire. Similarly, stereotyped figures are also employed for the priests, who are usually seen offering oblation into a fire in the company of several attendants. In the representations of musicians we are provided with rather accurate depictions of the musical instruments in vogue during the different periods and these should be of interest to both musicologists as well as social historians. The later Nepali paubhās further furnish us with ample material in terms of current fashions and textile designs, for these very likely copied prevalent modes in fashions. For instance, but for one or two exceptions, not until the mid-seventeenth century are the donors or the musicians provided with a headgear. In the Los Angeles Durgāmandala (Fig. 76) the male donor's head is covered by a beret-like cap placed at a rakish angle, while two persons in the Vanaratna paubhā (Fig. 7) wear caps on their heads. The conch blower's cap is somewhat like that worn by Tibetan monks, but the exact shape of the other cap is hard to determine. Indeed, this headgear seems also to have baffled the nineteenth century copyist (Fig. 8) who has conveniently changed it into a Mughal-style turban. A turban is also worn by Prakulideva in the Bhīmaratha paubhā (Fig. 9), but its style is quite different from that which was fashionable in the seventeenth century. If the artist had faithfully copied the fifteenth century original, as I believe he did, then we here encounter a form of turban which was in vogue in fifteenth century Nepal.

In a sense Vanaratna's paubhā (Fig. 7) is a good example of what secular pictures must have looked like in the fifteenth century. The surviving portions show us Vanaratna's widow distributing alms to beggars and mendicants, as I have already suggested in chapter two. Her portrait, as well as those of her companions, are obviously idealized, and the artist seems almost to have deified her by providing flowers in her hands. Indeed, had she been given a nimbus we might have mistaken her for the goddess Tārā. By comparing the fifteenth century picture with the nineteenth century copy we realize not only the extent of changes in fashions but also in figurative types, thereby demonstrating how generalized such portraits were. Once again we are struck by the evident theatricality of the postures and since Vanaratna's wife is by far the most important person in the painting, she is not only portrayed larger than the others, but she immediately attracts our attention with her serpentine body striking almost an unnaturalistic pose. Virtually the same formula employed by the illuminators for Māyā and her sister in manuscript illuminations (Fig. 22) is repeated with only slight modifications, such as the three-quarter profiles of the faces, or the attire.

It is interesting to note that the artist has arranged the two groups of figures in the two halves of the composition quite differently. Nothing is allowed to obscure our view of Vanaratna's wife, and her companions are not only reduced in size but are made to sit in an hieratic arrangement. In the other group, however, the organization of the figures is far more sophisticated and convincing. Not only do we encounter interesting figurative types, but they effectively convey the sense of eager anticipation with which the crowd approaches the lady for alms. The two conversing ascetics in the corner are remarkably lively and credible, as if the artist had observed such wandering beggars on the streets and had retained vivid images of them in his mind. The introduction of a mother and child in the group clearly demonstrates his eagerness to depict what he felt to be a typical crowd on such occasions.

Among the other early representations of donors those in the Los Angeles Viṣṇumandala (Figs. 1, 188) are worth mentioning. Here we have a rare instance of a self portrait by an artist since Tejarāma was the painter as well as donor of the paubhā. He certainly could have drawn the portraits of the members of his family from life, but, in point of fact, none of the representations appears to be individualistic. Tejarāma obviously did not look into a mirror when painting his own image, for his portrait is just as generalized as those of the others. It is interesting to observe that as early as the fifteenth century Nepali men were wearing a long double breasted coat which extended down to the ankles and possibly some form of pajamas underneath. The ladies seem to have draped a dhoti around the waist and a long-sleeved blouse above, a mode of dress still used by Nepali women today. Both men and women wore a light shawl flung around their shoulders and kept long hair which was pulled back and tied into a rather large bun. This does not appear to have been an affectation of Tejarāma and his relatives only as it can be observed in other pictures as well (Figs. 72, 74, 76) and was obviously the prevailing hair style.

In comparison to Tejarāma's self-portrait, the representations of Prakulideva and his wife (Fig. 9) seem far more individualistic. Although his dress is like that of Tejarāma, Prakulideva's attire with a distinctive turban gives him a more distinguished appearance. His features are far more personalized, and in this case we perhaps encounter a closer likeness of the man himself. As is usual in all such portraitures, the eyes are exceptionally large, and the well-trimmed, white beard adds a touch of dignity to the face. Likewise, the donors in the 1649 Cleveland paubhā (Fig. 113), notwithstanding their schematic postures, appear to have faces which can be readily distinguished from one another. Curiously, while several figures, including king Pratāpamalla, in the lower register wear Rajput turbans, the heads of the males receiving the Buddha's blessings are bare. Although the mode of dress was not altered fundamentally, the hair style seems to have become fashionable in the seventeenth century. None of the male donors, with the exception of the musicians at the bottom, has long hair gathered into a bun. Another significant difference between the figures in the Bhīmaratha paubhā and those in the Cleveland example may be noted in the complete profile representation of the faces in the latter, while those in the former are rendered in three-quarter profile. Generally, three-quarter profiles were preferred in pre-seventeenth century paintings, which is another reason why I believe that the artist Ratnasiṁha faithfully copied the fifteenth century original which commemorated Prakulideva's performance of the Bhīmaratha ceremony.

VI

At least as early as the fourteenth century representations of kings are included in Buddhist paubhās almost as a matter of course (Figs. 72, 74). There seems no reason to believe that these were portraits of ruling monarchs, as was the case during the late Malla period. The depictions are far too idealized and the images obviously conformed to a regal type rather than to individual kings. It is also significant that in none of these early representations do the kings wear any crowns, although the priests do so invariably. Nor are the royal personages distinguished in any other manner from the common man, wearing as they do the same mode of dress and even the same hair-style.

This seems to be the case also with the first indubitable portrait of a king (Fig. 189), which occurs in a manuscript of a *Devīmāhātmya* in the Prince of Wales Museum, Bombay. The king and his queen are seated on a rather simple throne, and the inscriptions above their heads identify them as Jagajjyotirmalla and Kamalādevī. Jagajjyotirmalla ruled the kingdom of Bhadgaon from 1613 until 1637, and the portrait must have been done in his lifetime. Certainly, the representations are flattering neither to the king nor his queen, and the artist was hardly an accomplished draughtsman. Although both faces are shown almost in profile, the further eye is partially included. Neither face can be considered as drawn realistically and the artist may never have even seen the king but painted an impression of what he was supposed to look like.

Comparatively more realistic portraits of kings begin to appear from about the middle of the seventeenth century. In at least two paubhās (Figs. 9, 113, 190) we see representations of King Pratāpamalla of Kathmandu, who may in fact have inspired the practice of including portraits of ruling monarchs in paubhās, as I suggested earlier. It is interesting to note that only in the earlier portrait (Fig. 190) does the king have a beard, though the facial features appear to be similar in both, and it would not be wrong to assume that in both instances we are given a reasonable likeness of Pratāpamalla who was one of the most colourful rulers of the later Malla period. What is significant is that we can almost pinpoint the adoption of the Mughal-Rajput mode of dress during this king's rule. As we have already noted, only a generation ago King Jagajjyotirmalla was portrayed wearing a dhotī and without a turban. However, from Pratāpamalla's time onwards, the Mughal-Rajput attire not only became fashionable at the court, but by the end of the century (Fig. 116) even musicians are dressed in the same mode, complete with turbans.

One of the finest royal portraits occurs on a manuscript cover which was discussed earlier (Fig. 191). Against a flat red background two persons are shown facing each other; one is a brahman who kneels on a rug and holds a manuscript which he seems to offer to a god distinguished by an aureole; the second figure seated on a lion throne also offers a lotus flower to the deity. His left hand clasps a *katar*, a type of dagger popular in Mughal India. A winged asparas riding on a cloud upholds the parasol of sovereignty above his head, thereby further emphasizing his royal status.

Despite the absence of an inscription it is not too difficult to identify the regal person as King Śrīnivāsamalla of Patan. The clue to this identification is provided by the image of the deity, who is none other than the popular Buddhist god known as Rāto (red) Machendranāth (Matsyendranātha), the patron of Patan. What is even more interesting is that three mounts are included below the god's feet, viz. a bull, a goose and the garuḍa, which are respectively associated with Śiva, Brahmā and Viṣṇu of the Hindu pantheon. Although a Hindu, Śrīnivāsamalla was a devout worshipper of Red Matsyendranātha, a Buddhist deity. Together with his prime minister Bhagiratha Bhāiyā and his family priest Viśvanātha Upādhyāya, he composed several *stotras* in honour of this particular god, and the manuscript being offered to the deity probably contained such laudatory verses.[7] No other king is known to have been so zealous a worshipper of this deity, and it seems certain, therefore, that the portraits on this cover represent king Śrīnivāsamalla and his perceptor.

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[7] See Regmi, *op. cit.*, pp. 282 ff.

The quality of the painting on this pair of covers (Figs. 63, 191) is so fine that we would hardly be wrong to consider them as royal commissions. The features are very sensitively delineated and, despite the idealized eyes, there seems no doubt that the faces were drawn from life. Indeed, if the manuscript was a royal commission then the artist may have been attached to the court and probably had some opportunity to observe his subjects. We can also be reasonably certain that the king's attire, jewelry, as well as the elegant turban, are not merely the products of the artist's imagination, and Viśvanātha Upādhyāya probably did have a goatee and a generous paunch.[8] Śrīnivāsamalla ruled briefly from 1681 until 1684 and the covers almost certainly were painted while he was king.

Portraits of several other kings are known from paubhās and scrolls but the type once established did not change substantially. Invariably the representations are in profile and the king is shown seated on a low throne or a carpet facing the priest, his hands joined in the gesture of reverence. Among the later portraits that of the ill-fated Prakāśamalla of Kathmandu (Fig. 194) is the most perceptive and obviously he had a very distinguished nose. A new iconographic feature is introduced in the portrait of king Jitāmitramalla of Bhadgaon (Fig. 192). Behind the king is added a snake canopy, as we often encounter in images of Viṣṇu (Figs. 1, 115, 116). From manuscript colophons we know that starting at least with Sthitirāja in the fourteenth century Malla kings claimed that they were incarnations of the god Viṣṇu. The serpent canopy behind Jitāmitramalla is simply a visual corroboration of this claim. A portrait of the Gurkhā conqueror Pṛthivī Nārāyaṇ Shāh rendered in 1772 (Fig. 120) continues this tradition, and it is well known that all his descendants persistently claimed their divine right to kingship by declaring themselves to be avatars of Viṣṇu.

To return to the 1681 Viṣṇu paubhā (Fig. 192), apart from Jitāmitramalla, we are also provided with portraits of Ugramalla, Bhupatīndramalla, who was only a boy at the time, and of Bhagirāma, who is characterized in the inscription as the *pradhānāṅga* or the prime minister. Once again we note how generalized the portraits are and but for the identifying labels one would hardly be able to recognize the different personages. The king is again bearded but otherwise the facial features of all the figures are so similar that they are scarcely distinguishable. The artist evidently was not too familiar with the various personalities involved and hence employed what had become the established formula for such representations. That most such royal portraits were considerably idealized becomes evident when we compare the representation of Bhupatīndramalla in a scroll (Fig. 151) with a mural in the Bhadgaon palace (Fig. 193). Although there is a basic resemblance between the two portraits, there are also significant differences. The artist responsible for this mural in a palace built by Bhupatīndra himself must have had a greater opportunity to study his subject, while the scroll painter probably rendered what he thought was a reasonable likeness. If we further compare these post-seventeenth century portraits with earlier representations of kings in paubhās (Fig. 72, 74), it becomes clear that the tendency to depict realistic facial features in the later pictures was due directly to the influence of contemporary Indian royal portraits. Generally, however, the impulse was to paint idealized portraits, following the early texts which we discussed in chapter two.

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[8] It is of course possible that the robust, bare-bodied figure is Bhagiratha Bhāiyā but the attire seems to suggest rather a brahman priest.

One of the curious features of such portraits is that the Malla kings are generally provided with a beard, with the exception of two Shāh kings (Figs. 120, 159, 195). A beard was probably considered to be a manly attribute, for most Rajput princes of India too donned elaborate beards, whiskers and moustaches. In the case of the Malla kings, whether it was actually customary to have a beard or whether it was simply an artistic convention is an intriguing question, but some of the bronze portraits of a number of Malla kings which may be seen in the three principal cities do show a beard.

VII

Most of the royal portraits noted so far are included in paubhās almost as a matter of course and were probably done so as gestures of respect. Even representations of Śrīnivāsamalla and Prakāśamalla (Figs. 191, 194) are elements of an iconographic scheme rather than pictures to be admired as portraiture. Remarkably few paintings are devoted exclusively to portraiture of any kind and all of them follow Indian models.

The Freer Gallery of Art possesses a formal portrait of King Gīrvāṇa Yuddhavikrama Shāh who ruled from 1799 until 1816 and died a young man. Above the picture a Persian inscription gives us the name of the king. Those who are familiar with stately Mughal portraits of the eighteenth century will at once recognize the style of this picture, and because of the Persian inscription, we can be certain that a Muslim artist was responsible for the painting. The wide terrace, with its richly inlaid balustrade, the detailed rendering of the sumptuous Mughal carpets, the sense of depth provided by the trees behind the balustrade are all distinctive features of such formal portraits executed in late eighteenth century India. What is intriguing, however, is whether the portrait was rendered in India or by an Indian artist residing in Nepal. If it was painted in India then we must assume that it was commissioned when Gīrvāṇa visited an Indian prince; on the other hand, if executed in Nepal then the artist may have been attached to the court. In any event, the painting may have introduced a style of portraiture which became popular during the nineteenth century.

Portraits of Gīrvāṇa Yuddhavikrama Shāh occur in several paubhās and scrolls in which his divine status is announced by the snake canopy behind his head (Fig. 158). A close comparison of this image and the formal portrait (Fig. 195) reveals how generalized the representation on the scroll is, whereas the other provides us with not only a better picture but also a closer likeness. Interestingly, in the scroll Gīrvāṇa's head is covered with a "normal" फेटा turban but in the formal portrait he wears a different kind of head-gear which looks like a "hat" embellished in the front with a bejewelled diadem. Professor van Lohuizen-de Leeuw informs me that this hat is in fact a specific type of turban which was fashionable during this period in India and the diadem is called "agrafe" in French. Possibly the turban was popularized by Gīrvāṇa, for a number of nineteenth century kings also wear it. This is one reason why I believe the figure of King Suratha in the *Devīmāhātmya* murals in the Kathmandu palace (Fig. 161) was probably modelled after Rājendravikrama Shāh who was forced to abdicate and go into exile.

The practice of modelling figures of kings in narrative scrolls or religious paubhās after reigning monarchs may not have been altogether unusual. We do know that during the Licchavi period it was not uncommon to fashion images of gods following the likenesses or proportions of kings and princes. Powerful and egocentric monarchs are known to have done this, and, after all, the portraits of kings were not only idealized, but even the texts recommended that the same figurative type should be used for gods and kings, as I pointed out in an earlier chapter. Inscriptions inform us that divine images also were often sculpted in accordance with the proportions of a deceased person. For instance, when one of Yakṣamalla's sons died, he commissioned an image of Viṣṇu which was made according to the physical proportions of his dead son.[9] Again, in the seventeenth century, when Pratāpamalla's two wives died, he consecrated a group of images of Kṛṣṇa with his two consorts, the latter in the likeness of the two deceased queens.[10]

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[9] D. R. Regmi, *Medieval Nepal*, III, p. 80. Yakṣamalla seems to have commissioned another image in honour of his mother (*Idem*, p. 58).

Since the Nepali kings considered themselves to be incarnations of Viṣṇu, their representations were often provided with serpent hoods. One wonders, therefore, whether a nineteenth century picture representing the goddess Lakṣmī (Fig. 197) is not meant to be a deified portrait of a powerful queen as Lakṣmī is normally not provided with a snake's hood. Obviously the picture was patterned after such formal portraits as that of Gīrvāṇa (Fig. 195). In fact, it is instructive to note how much more concerned the Nepali artist was with visual order and hieratic design, as is apparent from the uniform pattern of the flowering trees behind the terrace, the balloons of clouds at the top, and the presence of both the sun and the moon. It need hardly be stressed that the painting is a distinct departure from the usual types of religious pictures we have encountered so far, and but for the two additional arms, the figure may well be an idealized portrait of a royal lady, such as Lakṣmīdevī, the queen of Rājendravikrama Shāh.

A second picture, perhaps by the same artist and revealing a similar proclivity for deification, shows a male of a dark complexion standing on a terrace (Fig. 198). He has a nimbus behind his head, and his principal hands hold a bow and an arrow. In addition, possibly a thousand other arms also holding bows in the right and arrows in the left are arranged beautifully in such a fashion that they almost appear as gigantic wings. Here again we wonder if this was not intended to be a formal portrait of a king or a princely figure whose conceit was monumental. Apparently he also considered himself to be an incarnation of Viṣṇu, and the bow and arrow in his hands would suggest an identification with Rāma. That the representation is meant to be a portrait is clear not only from the attire and the headgear, but also from the facial features which are very personal. It is of further interest to note that the artist has departed from the usual practice of showing the face in profile and has given it an almost frontal representation.

Since the picture does not bear an inscription there is no sure way of identifying the figure. However, a clue may be provided by a mural in the mansion known as Thapathali in Patan (Fig. 199). The section of the mural illustrated here shows an elaborately robed Kṛṣṇa standing on a lotus and playing upon a flute. He is accompanied by Rādhā and one can also see the forepart of a splendid cow gazing adoringly at the god. What is intriguing is the astonishing likeness between the face

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[1]f D. R. Regmi, *Medieval Nepal*, II, p. 66.

of Kṛṣṇa and that of the person with the thousand arms. The representation of Rādhā too has a strong portrait-like quality, not only because of her garments, including the very sumptuous Kashmiri shawl, but also because of the distinctive characteristics of the face and the general deportment of the figure. Thapathali was built by Jang Bahadur who was one of the most powerful personalities in mid-nineteenth century Nepal, and one wonders if the representations of Kṛṣṇa and Rādhā were not modelled upon the master and mistress of the house. In that case it is possible that the thousand-armed figure in the other picture also portrays Jang Bahadur as Rāma, an incarnation of Viṣṇu.

After the mid-nineteenth century Nepali portraits were rendered entirely in the European academic tradition, often by European or Indian artists. Possibly there are still other formal portraits going back as far as the seventeenth century in the royal archives, but I have not had the opportunity to examine them. In any event, such portraits were very likely rendered in the Rajput style, sufficiently particularized so that one could recognize the person, but at the same time, displaying a strong tendency to idealization.

Finally, a few words may be said about paintings depicting historical subjects. We have already had occasion to mention several, particularly those that were commemorative (Figs. 7-9). The paubhā representing the restoration of Svayambhūnātha (Fig. 108) also records a historical occasion, but it is more or less a cartographical picture, as also is a scroll showing views of Kathmandu (Fig.164). The only other painting of a historical subject known to me is a long scroll in the Itum baha[11] at Kathmandu (Fig. 198). The painting is said to chronicle the history of the monastery, but it is brought out only on special occasions and is therefore difficult to study or photograph. The small section illustrated here, however, clearly demonstrates how the same basic style was followed both for religious and secular themes.

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[11] I am indebted to Dr. Mary Slusser for bringing this scroll to my attention and also for providing me with the photograph reproduced here. She has published segments of it in Nepali in *Svatantra Viśva* (vol.7, no. 7, pp. 40-41), a journal published in Kathmandu by the U.S.I.S.

रवि शाक्य

CHAPTER SEVEN

ARTISTIC SOURCES AND INFLUENCES

I

Nepal's geographical position has in large measure determined her artistic sources and influences. The culture of Nepal derives primarily from the civilization which evolved over millennia in the northern Indian plains, always more easily accessible from the valley than the Central Tibetan plateau in the north. However, from about the seventh century Nepal enjoyed a unique commercial and cultural relationship with Tibet and played a predominant role in the development of both the religious and artistic traditions of that country. Keeping in mind that art rarely follows a simple, linear course of development, I shall endeavour in this chapter first to determine the extent to which the Indian pictorial tradition influenced Nepali painting and then to review the artistic relationship between Nepal and Tibet.

Both epigraphical and sculptural remains of the Licchavi period clearly document the intimate relationship between Nepali culture and the Indian civilization. The language of the court was Sanskrit, the script in which the inscriptions are written is a local variation of the Gupta Brāhmī, and even in the earliest examples of sculpture we discern a direct and basic influence of Indian artistic styles and norms. However, just as one can recognize local variations and peculiarities in the script, so also in sculpture a distinct local flavour and expression are easily perceptible. Although no examples of Licchavi paintings have survived, one can readily assume that they must have been painted basically in the same style as that which prevailed in Gupta India. The Kinnarī Jātaka murals which embellished a fifth century Buddhist temple must have been rendered in a local variant of the Ajanta style as I have already mentioned. The residual legacy of this style may be perceived in the eleventh century manuscript illuminations discussed in chapter three.

Ever since their discovery in Tun-huang by Aurel Stein, several banners have been regarded as the earliest examples of Nepali painting.[1] These banners[2] are generally dated around 900, but there is nothing specifically Nepali about them;

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[1] S. Kramrisch, "Nepalese Paintings", p. 130.

[2] A. Stein, *Serindia*, IV (Oxford, 1921), Pl. LXXXVII; P. Pal, *Art of Tibet*, Figs. 11, 12.

rather, they show strong influences of the Kashmiri figurative tradition. It is, of course, not impossible that Nepali paubhās or bronzes once found their way into the Central Asian monasteries, but the surviving artistic evidence from the area reflects greater influences of the Kashmiri rather than the Nepali tradition.

Even since the earliest Nepali manuscript illuminations became known, it has been commonly assumed that they are nothing but a provincial version of those of the Pāla period (9th-11th c. A.D.) executed in the monasteries of Eastern India. Writing in 1927 Coomaraswamy stressed that "the distinction of style as between the Bengali and the Naipāli illustrated manuscripts is so slight as to be scarcely definable in a few words."[3] Some years later, in the most comprehensive article on Nepali painting written to date, Stella Kramrisch stated "the earliest paintings known as yet cannot be much anterior to A.D. 900 approximately. They are partly based on, and to a large extent copied from Eastern Indian prototypes from Nalanda and elsewhere."[4] However, she did recognize the stylistic differences between the two traditions, but most authors since have not.

In almost all subsequent essays on Nepali manuscript illuminations, particularly among Indian scholars, one notes a distinctly disdainful attitude. An Indian art historian not only finds "no appreciable major stylistic difference" between Nepali and Eastern Indian illuminations, but goes on to state that while the eleventh century illuminations have some redeeming features, already by the twelfth century "Nepalese paintings . . . throw aside the refined elegance and exuberance and the continuous, sensitive flux of the Eastern line, but compositionally, too, they bid good-bye to the continuous and sweeping rhythm of the East Indian composition and adopt one that is clipped and divided in single units."[5] Recently two more scholars have written at length about Eastern Indian manuscript illuminations and both have stressed the dependence of the Nepali tradition upon that of India.[6] S. K. Saraswati is less critical of the Nepali style than others, but he too feels that "the Nepalese artists were not successful always to capture the verve and spirit that characterized the Eastern movement . . . The Nepalese idiom, apparently a derivation of the Eastern school, does not appear to have been much concerned, however, with modelling by colour shading and line. Whenever this was attempted it was liable to become crisp with the curves short, as if clipped. Nepal borrowed the form and manner of the Eastern school within certain reservations, it seems. In this residual Nepalese idiom the Eastern school survives for a few centuries more after its disappearance from its own country."[7]

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[3] A. K. Coomaraswamy, *History of Indian and Indonesian Art*, p. 156. However, Coomaraswamy with his characteristic perceptiveness did recognize that Nepali art stems directly from the Gupta tradition and stated that "Nepal possesses an important school of painting, which in the same way as the bronzes reflects Indian forms, and has preserved even up to modern times a hieratic style, comparable to that of the Pāla and Gujrati schools". (*Idem*, p. 155).

[4] Kramrisch, *op. cit.*, pp. 129-147.

[5] N. R. Ray in *The History and Culture of the Indian People*, *V*, (ed) R. C. Majumdar, p 694.

[6] D. P. Ghosh, "Eastern School of Medieval Indian Painting", pp. 91-103; S. K. Saraswati, "East Indian Manuscript Painting", pp. 243-262.

It has been necessary to quote such passages at length in order to show that they reveal a consistent pattern of thought. All these comments are based upon two fundamental assumptions: a) that the Nepali style is a derivation of the Pāla style, and b) that the Nepali illuminations are necessarily inferior. Even if the former were true, the latter does not follow as a corollary. After all, Roman and Japanese aesthetics are derived from the Greek and Chinese traditions respectively, and yet each is creative in its own right. Similarly, even if it could be demonstrated that the Nepali style of manuscript illuminations was derived from Eastern India, it does not necessarily follow that the former is aesthetically inferior than the latter. On the contrary, the manuscript illuminations from Nepal reveal not only a richer repertoire than those preserved from Eastern India, but often display far more complex compositions which are pictorially more exciting. While it is obvious that both traditons are closely related, in the chapter on manuscript illuminations I have demonstrated, hopefully in a convincing fashion, how different the two expressions are. It would perhaps be more appropriate to state that both the Nepali and the Eastern Indian illuminations are derived from an earlier and common heritage. Just as the script used in eleventh century Nepali manuscripts developed directly from the earlier script of the Licchavi period, so also the style of painting in which the manuscripts were illuminated must have derived from the earlier Licchavi style. The fact that the Nepali painting tradition goes back at least to the fifth century has already been pointed out.

II

Between the thirteenth and the seventeenth centuries, Nepali painting seems to have developed more or less on its own. Little is known of painting in Eastern India at this period, and the Western Indian style does not appear to have had any effect upon Nepal at all. During the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries Indian artists were also illustrating books in a style derived largely from the Persian painting tradition, but this style too seems to have remained unknown to Nepali artists. There was obviously no interest in Persian literature in Nepal and hence few Persian books entered the country. However, it would be of some interest to compare representative examples of fifteenth and sixteenth century Indian paintings with contemporary Nepali works in order to determine whether there was any mutual relationshop or a parallel stylistic development.

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[7] Saraswati, *op. cit.*, p. 259.

It may be stated at the outset that the hieratic style of Jaina manuscript illuminations exerted very little influence upon Nepali painting. The only common factor between the Jaina and the Nepali styles of the fifteenth century is the strong impulse in both to use the colour red. However, the red employed in Jaina illuminations and that in the Nepali paintings are quite distinct in their intensity as well as tonality. Jaina manuscript illuminations also use rich ultramarine blues and gold, both of which are never seen in Nepali paintings. The most significant difference is noticeable in the figurative types employed in the two styles. The figures in Jaina paintings are generally stiff, angular, hieratic and devoid of sensuous grace. In the fourteenth century Nepali artists developed a type of figure which still used the earlier form, but with greater emphasis on linear, wiry bodies without a sense of volume but strikingly sinuous in a very contrived manner. The most notable difference lies in the compulsive and ubiquitous use of the further eye in Jaina paintings, a cliche rarely adopted by the Nepali artists, and certainly not to the same exaggereated degree. With a few exceptions, the Western Indian artists, from as far back as the twelfth century, portrayed the heads of their figures in profile, but the Nepali painters not infrequently represented the faces only in partial profile.

There are some similarities, however, between Nepali pictures and contemporary Indian paintings depicting secular and didactic subjects. For instance, if we compare the narrative panels in paubhās of the fourteenth or fifteenth century (Figs. 74, 97) with Indian paintings of the period, such as the *Vasantavilāsa* scroll (Fig. 200), the *Āraṇyaka Parvan* manuscript illuminations or the Palam *Mahāpurāṇa*,[8] there seems no doubt that they belong to the same pictorial tradition. Apart from the prolific use of the red background, we also find the same tendency to alternate the red with blues. Mostly the figures are represented in a single plane along the edge of the composition, and trees, rocks, and architectural devices are added perfunctorily, whenever demanded by the theme. However, the rocks are rendered differently

[8] K. Khandalavala and M. Chandra, *New Documents of Indian Painting—A Reappraisal*, Bombay, 1969, pl 13-16 and pls. 18-19.

in the two styles; the Nepali artists continuing the multi-coloured, cube-like forms of the Gupta tradition in a more manneristic version, while the Indian artists preferred a more suggestive and summary compilation of flame-like shapes. The trees are depicted conceptually in both traditions and generally they consist of pillar-like trunks tapering as they rise and crowned with a bulbous leafy dome reminiscent of well-trimmed trees in formal gardens. At times the trunks sway almost in an arc and usually in a symmetrical fashion both in Nepali and Indian paintings. Both styles employ the same conceptual formula to represent water, but rarely in Nepali paintings of this period do we see any attempt to indicate the sky. Finally, although the motifs filling the background in the florid Newari style pictures of the sixteenth century are different (Figs. 138-140), a similar impulse to pack the ground with vegetative motifs is also encountered in some contemporary Western Indian paintings, particularly in the decorative borders of Jaina religious texts.[9]

There is no evidence that the Jaina faith had any followers in Nepal and no illuminated Jaina manuscript has been found in the country. Hence, it is not surprising that Jaina paintings exerted no significant influence upon Nepal. A closer relationship between Nepal and Eastern India during the eleventh-twelfth century has already been established by a comparison of manuscript illuminations. Some Nepali paubhās, the Cleveland Tārā (Fig. 71) in particular, may be considered to reflect the type of painting which must have been admired by Buddhist patrons in Pāla India. Especially, the shrine in the Cleveland Tārā shows an architectural design seen more frequently in Eastern Indian manuscript illuminations as well as stone steles rather than in Nepali paintings and reliefs. Mandalas painted for the Indian Buddhist monasteries must have looked very similar to those that survive in Nepal. More importantly, the manuscript cover of about the thirteenth century (Fig. 173) is clearly a forebear of the style in which the sixteenth century Indian *Gītagovinda* is painted (Fig. 201). Although the foliage in the latter is employed with greater abandon, in both the sinewy creepers and vines caress and cling to upright tree trunks in a similar fashion. Indeed, the trees behind Nāgārjuna and Śākyamuni in a late fourteenth century paubhā (Fig. 78) are precursors of similarly conceptualized trees in fifteenth and sixteenth century Indian paintings, as we see in Jaina illuminated manuscripts, or in the Prince of Wales *Laur Chanda* pictures.[10] It is also interesting to note that in a number of *Laur Chanda* paintings[11] the artist uses a curtain-like motif along the top of the composition as is frequently seen in Nepali paintings.

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[9] *Idem*, Figs. 49-50, 59-60, 66, 77-80.

[10] *Idem*, Figs. 18, 20, 163, 165, 171, 173.

[11] *Idem*, Figs. 172-173.

It would seem thus that the Indian pictorial tradition was probably introduced into Nepal at least as early as the fifth century when the Nepali court, under the Licchavis, began adopting Indian cultural traits in a serious manner. Certainly the history of Nepali sculpture shows that during the next millennium the local artists did develop a distinct aesthetic although based primarily on Indian tradition. Illuminated manuscripts from Eastern India were introduced into the Nepali monasteries, probably after the eleventh century, but they do not seem to have influenced the Nepali style as strongly as it has been believed hitherto. The Nepali expression of the Monastic style almost certainly derives from earlier, local painting styles of which we have no surviving examples. Between the thirteenth and the sixteenth centuries painting in Nepal continues the Monastic style but with recognizable variations and without any fresh stylistic influence from India, although certain mannerisms and conventions developed in a parallel fashion in both regions. Not until the seventeenth century did the Nepali artists borrow heavily from contemporary Indian styles, as they had done once before during the early Licchavi period.

III

I have frequently alluded to the fact that some time in the seventeenth century Nepali artists suddenly became aware of both the Mughal and Rajput styles of painting. The profound influence of the Rajput style on Nepali pictures, particularly of narrative subjects, is undeniable, but it is less easy to ascertain the exact Indian sources. Nor is it clear why a sudden interest in contemporary Indian styles of paintings should have developed in mid-seventeenth century Nepal when for the previous half a millennium or so the artists of the valley seem to have remained relatively insular.

Except for the usual commercial and religious contacts maintained by both countries, as in the past, there is no evidence to demonstrate that the three courts in seventeenth century Nepal cultivated a particularly close relationship either with the imperial Mughal court at Agra or with those of the Rajput princes. With regard to the Mughals, the traditional chronicles tell us that king Mahendramalla of Kathmandu (r. 1560-1574) issued coins after obtaining permission from the Mughal Emperor Akbar. Whether or not this is true, Mahendramalla may have been forced to acknowledge some sort of imperial suzerainty. By 1570 Akbar had become master of much of North India and it would have been an act of expediency on the part of the Nepali king to acknowledge the emperor's paramountcy, if only to forestall his military designs in the Himalayas. At any rate, Nepali kings may have sent tribute to the imperial court, as did most other North Indian kings of the period, even if they otherwise retained an independent status. It is worth noting that the French traveller Travernier, who visited India in the seventeenth century, mentioned in passing that the kings of Nepal were vassals of the Mughals.[12]

Whether or not the Nepali kings actually owed political allegiance to the Mughals that they did come under their social and cultural influence is clear. The most visible effect is perceptible in the new mode of dress and courtly attire adopted by Nepali kings at least from Pratāpamalla onwards. Eccentric as he was, Pratāpamalla even issued a coin in imitation of Mughal currency with the legends written in Arabic charcaters. Indeed, there was considerable interest in the Persian language at this time, partly due to the presence of Kashmiri and Panjabi traders in the valley. A large number of Persian words came to be included in the Newari language, and, of course, Mughal money was legal tender in the valley. Some of the buildings erected during the Shāh period reflect influences of Mughal architecture, although without any artistic merit.

If our knowledge of the relationship between the Nepali courts and that of the imperial Mughal is so tenuous, even less is known of their association with Rajput courts. The only recorded instance of a matrimonial alliance between a Nepali king and an Indian state is furnished by Pratāpamalla's marriage with two princesses of Cooch Bihar, a small kingdom in northern Bengal. However, in 1722 Father Desideri, who passed through Nepal on his way back from Tibet, wrote: "The kinglet of Kathmandu is not a native of the country, he must be a Rajeput (Rajput) a pagan nation of mogol between Suret and Agra. His chief wife must be of the same nation in order that their son may inherit."[13] Father Desideri also goes on to state that the king of Kathmandu was a minor and because his mother was from India a number of Muhammadans held influential positions at court. The king he refers to was obviously Bhāskaramalla, who ascended the throne at the age of four and died when he was only twenty-six. We also know from other sources that during the reign of his successor there was considerable friction between the Muslims and the local courtiers.

Apart from Pratāpamalla's two wives from Cooch Bihar, at least one other Malla queen was a princess of Mithila, a kingdom in Bihar, while another is characterized simply as the daughter of a *rājaputra* (*rāja-putratanayā*). The expression *rājaputra-tanayā* is rather curious for if she was the daughter of a king the proper term would have been *rājaputri*. It appears, therefore, that here *rājaputra* is a Sanskritization of the colloquial term *rājput*. However, we still cannot presume that the Nepali kings were marrying princesses from Rajput dynasties of Rajasthan, Central India or the Panjab hills. More likely, they took wives from the many semi-independent feudal kingdoms which flourished in Eastern India at the time.[14]

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[12] D. R. Regmi, *Medieval Nepal*, II, pp. 1006-1007. Apparently the king of Nepal had to send an elephant every year as tribute.

[13] *Idem*, p. 1008.

Nepal's relationship with Mithila is an ancient one and brahmans and pundits from that kingdom have enjoyed the patronage of the valley courts at least from the time of Sthitirājamalla, if not earlier. During the period under survey court culture in general and literature in particular were heavily influenced by Mithila. The languages were similar and the same dramas and didactic literature were popular in both areas. Along with Bengal, Mithila was a flourishing centre for mystical Viṣṇuism, especially the Kṛṣṇa cult, which also appealed to Nepali Hindus. Certainly the influence of Bengali architecture is evident in seventeenth century stone temples, but whether Vaiṣṇava paintings from this region were also familiar is more difficult to establish. This strong interest in Viṣṇuism does explain the greater popularity of Vaiṣṇava paintings during the seventeenth century.

Thus, there is little historical evidence to demonstrate a close relationship between Nepal and Rajasthan during the Malla period. The various kinds of rhetorical compositions, didactic poetry and drama which were popular in Rajasthan were hardly familiar in Nepal, where the taste in literature remained closer to that of Mithila or Bengal. Therefore, we are entirely dependent upon the paintings themselves to determine which particular Rajput school had so forcefully captured the artist's imagination in late Malla Nepal. However, seventeenth century Nepali kings were deeply interested in Indian music and several, in fact, composed texts on musicology. It is not improbable that illuminated texts of the Rāgamālā were brought into the valley from North India, possibly Rajasthan.

Although we cannot demonstrate a direct intercourse between the Malla kings and the Rajput courts, it is possible that social exchanges were more common after the Shāh conquest in 1769. The ancestors of the Shāhs are said to have come to Gurkha from the Indian plains and they may have entered into matrimonial relations with Rajput princes more frequently than the Mallas. However, we do know that Malla kings went on pilgrimage to India and it would have been natural for them to bring back books and paintings. Moreover, during the reign of the austere Aurangzeb in the second half of the seventeenth century some Indian artists may have migrated into Nepal just as others had gone to the Rajput courts of the Panjab hills.

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[14] More probably, matrimonial alliances were made with chieftains from Bihar and Uttar Pradesh. Nepali royal families probably maintained a close relationship with the ruling family of Banaras.

IV

The seventeenth century Rāgamālā set (Figs. 181-183) introduces us dramatically not only to a new style of painting but also to a new type. The idea of a picture album, consisting of separate and individual compositions, is certainly derived from India but it is more difficult to relate the set to a specific Rajput school. I have elsewhere suggested that the paintings have certain similarities with early seventeenth century pictures of the Mewar school, particularly with the Chawand Rāgamālā set of 1605. It must be emphasized that in many instances the Nepali artists employed iconographic features not familiar in the Rajasthani tradition, and a few of the rāgiṇīs appear to be altogether unknown. Nevertheless, that the artist worked from some sort of visual model from India seems certain. A clue may be provided by the colophon page in which we are told that Uṣā watched Śiva perform the *lāsya* dance in Kailāśa and then taught it to the women of Svarāṣṭra. Svarāṣṭra probably is the same as Surāṣṭra in which case the poet who composed the verses may have been a brahman from Surāṣṭra or Saurāṣṭra on the western seabord of India.

Apart from the fact that the facial types seem in general to resemble those seen in the Chawand Rāgamālā pictures, there is one other curious feature in the Nepali set which is worth noting. One of the figures in the Kocakarī rāgiṇī (Fig. 182) wears a tall cylindrical hat, which is reminiscent of similar Chugtai hats worn by ladies in the imperial Mughal court, as may be seen in a late sixteenth century *Baburnameh* picture (Fig. 185). In some Mughal paintings the hats are truncated, but in others they are tall with a tapered end, almost like a dunce's cap. In the Nepali Rāgamālā the hat is also given to Bharatamuni and it occurs frequently in later paintings. For instance, in the 1694 Kṛṣṇalīlā scroll (Fig. 143) several dancing gopas wear it, while in other paintings it is worn by musicians and females who are meant to represent kinnarīs (Fig. 150). To my knowledge, such a hat is not found in any paintings from Rajasthan, and only in one Pahari picture of the early eighteenth century do we see a lady wearing a similar headgear (Fig. 149) It would seem reasonable to conclude that the Nepali artist copied the hat from a Mughal painting, but otherwise, seventeenth century Nepali pictures do not reveal strong and significant influences of the Mughal style.

Thus, not only is it difficult to establish the precise stylistic source of the Rāgamālā pictures but the set clearly demonstrates the inventiveness of the unknown Nepali master responsible for it. Whatever his model, he did not imitate it verbatim but adopted only those elements which suited his artistic taste and then painted the pictures in a refreshingly original style. It is curious, however, that no other examples of painting rendered in this particular style has come to light yet. The near contemporary cover of a manuscript in the Binney Collection (Fig. 180) may be the closest parallel, but the facial types are notably different.

The next group of paintings reflecting the Rajput style belongs to the end of the seventeenth century. Once again, the Nepali artists, who were never blind imitators, created a synthetic style borrowing elements from both Rajput and Tibetan paintings, about which more will be said presently. If, however, we had to look for a single stylistic source in India, all available evidence would point to the Mewar school. A comparison of the figurative types and dresses between the 1692 Kṛṣṇalīlā scroll (Fig. 142) and the Mewar *Rāmāyaṇa* of 1649 (Fig. 148) clearly establishes their close relationship. The figures of the brahmans are almost identical especially in their hair style and mode of dress, while the animals in the Kṛṣṇalīlā scroll, as also in later paintings (Fig. 158), follow closely the Mewar convention. The multi-coloured cows are more common in Mewar paintings than in other Rajput schools. In the eighteenth century, when most Rajput schools were strongly influenced by the Mughal style and were revealing a more painterly impulse in their works, the artists of Mewar and the so-called Malwa school continued to paint in a more or less two-dimensional manner employing very little shading and emphasizing flat areas saturated with colours. In general Nepali artists too preferred this mode of painting, and almost certainly their models must have been didactic pictures of the type seen in the 1649 Mewar *Rāmāyaṇa.*

By 1675 the small hill states in the Panjab Himalayas were also emerging as flourishing centres of painting. The origin of the early Pahari style remains unexplained and it is difficult to believe that no form of painting was known in this area prior to 1675. After all, the sculptural and architectural traditions of the Chamba and the Kulu-Kangra regions go back at least to the Gupta period, while to the north murals of at least the eleventh century can still be seen in Tibetan monasteries. It is possible, therefore, that murals, religious scroll paintings as well as illustrated manuscripts, particularly of the *Bhāgavata* and the *Caṇḍī*, were familiar in the area from much earlier times, as we encounter in Nepal. However, princely patronage of the art of painting at the Himalayan courts during the latter half of the seventeenth century obviously demonstrates the strong impact of imperial Mughal tastes. Curiously, in Nepal too, we first notice the appearance of a new style based upon Rajput paintings around this time, for no example can be dated earlier than 1650. Since the Panjab hills and Nepal are similarly isolated from the plains one would expect a time lag before the arrival and absorption of cultural ideas in these regions.

What seems curious is that we have little historical evidence to show any relationship between Nepal and kingdoms of the Indian Himalayas in the seventeenth century. As stated before, the Malla kings seem to have retained closer ties with the kingdoms of northern Bihar and Bengal. It is possible that after 1760 the Shāh dynasty, which came originally from Gurkha, a region nearer to the Western Himalayan states, did have social intercourse with the Indian hill dynasties, but there is no evidence to substantiate this either. In the early nineteenth century, however, after the wars between the Gurkhas and several Western Himalayan states, contemporary Pahari paintings may have found their way into the valley.

The earliest picture to reveal Pahari influence is that of an erotic subject (Fig. 186). A comparison with a painting attributed to Kulu (Fig. 187) clearly reflects their stylistic similarities. The Kulu painting is dated around 1720, and while it is difficult to suggest a precise date for the erotic picture, it does seem to be later than the Rāgamālā but earlier thanthe Piṇḍapātra Avadāna of 1716 (Fig. 117). Thus, it would be difficult to date the picture much later than 1700. Although there are significant differences, some of the features in both the erotic picture and the Piṇḍapātra Avadāna appear to relate to Pahari conventions. Especially noteworthy are the similar manner in which the architecture is employed, the use of the bed with the cushion in the erotic picture, the use of striped jāmās and carpets in the Piṇḍapātra Avadāna, and the way in which the figures sit with legs folded back. There seems little doubt that the artists of one area were familiar with pictures from the other. However, unless more securely dated paintings from both regions appear, we cannot conclusively decide the direction in which the influence flowed.

Broad influences of the Pahari tradition may be perceived in several paintings of the eighteenth century (Figs. 119, 127, 150, 151, 154, 156) and are especially strong in an unfinished paubhā of Amoghapāśa (Fig. 6). The narrative panels, particularly in the way two conversing figures are shown within a pavilion as well as the disposition of the architectural settings, are clearly reminiscent of the compositions that are typical of Pahari pictures executed around 1800. In all these paintings, however, we note simply the adaptation of some stylistic conventions of the Pahari tradition, and no attempt is made to either relate the figures to the landscape with greater optical veracity or to emply the colors with greater subtlety and emotional impact, as was done by contemporary Pahari artists. Rarely are the colors in Nepali paintings as muted and as expressive of the subject's mood as they are in Pahari pictures. Only in the Śṛngaverī scroll (Fig. 154, 155) or the Devīmāhātmya murals (Fig. 160-61) do we find a similar penchant for soft colouring, especially a gray seen also in some Chamba paintings, and subtle but expressive portrayal of emotional moods.

Although not quite as accomplished aesthetically, a *Bhāgavata* album rendered around 1875 (Fig. 170-172) reveals a direct stylistic affinity with paintings of the Kangra school. A comparison between some of these pictures and the well-known "Lambargaon" *Gītagovinda*[15] makes it clear that the artist responsible for the *Bhāgavata* pictures must have seen such Kangra paintings. The composition, foliage, the concept of space and colours are handled in much the same way in both sets, although the Nepali artist was hardly as talented as his Pahari colleague. Limited influence of Kangra paintings is also discernible in some of the murals executed in the second half of the nineteenth century, but the Nepali tradition was now too exhausted to create a new style.

It is unnecessary to stress further the profound influence of Indian paintings upon the Nepali pictorial tradition after the seventeenth century. Nonetheless, it is equally clear that the Nepali artists were not blind imitators, and like their colleagues in mid-seventeenth century Basohli, they created a distinctive style of their own, borrowing significantly from Rajput paintings. It is rather curious that the more "realistic" pictures of the Mughals did not seem to have made much impression upon the Nepali artists. This is somewhat surprising considering the alacrity with which the Nepali court adopted some of the Mughal courtly manners and customs, particularly in sartorial matters. The only perceptible influence of Mughal paintings is visible in portraits, but there, too, the Nepali artists affected merely a mannerism without really capturing the spirit behind the sophisticated art of Mughal portraiture.

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[15] E. Binney, 3rd and W. G. Archer, *Rajput Miniatures from the Collection of Edwin Binney, 3rd*, Portland, Ore., 1968, pp. 120-121.

V

Traditionally Nepal's political relations with Tibet go back at least to the seventh century when the Tibetan King Srong-tsen Gampo is said to have married a Nepali princess. The legend is preserved only in Tibet, and the Nepali chroniclers make no mention of this event. Commercial relations between the two countries may go back earlier still, but probably there was little cultural exchange of any significance. After the seventh century commerce increased steadily, and it would not be an exaggeration to claim that by the eleventh century much of the valley's wealth was due to the flourishing Tibetan trade. Certainly during the Malla period one of the chief sources of state revenue for the kingdoms in the valley was excise duties levied upon traders.

Commerce between Nepal and Tibet has remained the prerogative of the Newars, who may belong to the same ethnic stock as the Tibetans; certainly their language is regarded as deriving from the Tibeto-Burman linguistic group. Physically too the Newars have more features in common with the Tibetans than with the Gurkhāli-speaking peoples and their culture has preserved many traits which are patently non-Sanskritic. Since polygamy was permitted in Newar society, many merchants took a wife in Tibet and maintained a second family there. The children of such marriages played an important role in the cultural life of Tibet, for many of them became members of the artisan class and were responsible for much of Tibet's metalwork.

Apart from such resident craftsmen, there was a constant flow of artists from Nepal into Tibet. As Professor Tucci emphasized in his *Tibetan Painted Scrolls* "the afflux of Nepalese artists into Tibet lasted for centuries, indeed in certain epochs it became more intense, for instance during the Sa skya pa period, when teams of Nepalese craftsmen were invited by the abbots of those monasteries."[16] If, indeed, a Nepali princess did go to Tibet to marry Srong-tsen Gampo, it is possible that her entourage included some artists. Certainly some of the images in Lhasa, said to belong to this period, bear striking resemblance to sculptures of Licchavi Nepal,[17] and accounts of the construction and decoration of the Samye monastery (A.D. 775) clearly mention the presence of Nepali artists. Or again, there are records of Nepali artists who were invited in the ninth century to build the royal temple commissioned by Ral-pa-can. Since then until recent decades Nepali artists were always welcome in Tibet.

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[16] G. Tucci, *Tibetan Painted Scrolls*, I, p. 277.

[17] Liu I-se (ed.), *Hsi-tang Fu-Chiao I-shu*, Figs. 60-62.

The most celebrated of the later artists was A-ni-ko, who was invited to Tibet by Phakpa, the Sakya pa abbott, and ultimately went on to China to become the "inspector of artisans" for the Emperor Kubilai Khan. In the words of Tucci: "He is the first of a long series of artists whose names have been lost, but the eulogies of monasteries and the lamas' biographies abound in general allusions to makers of statues (*lha-bzo pa*) and to painters (*lha-bris pa*) from Nepal; there was no convent which at the moment of its foundation or its greatest prosperity was not embellished by them with statues or frescoes. From the Sa skya pa chronicles to the eulogy of gNas rñiṅ, from the Myan c'un to the abbotts' lives, various confirmations can be drawn of the uninterrupted flow into Tibet of Nepalese artists and craftsmen."[18]

Apart from literary allusions, strong and pervasive influences of Nepali painting may be observed extensively in the surviving murals in Tibetan monasteries. As Tucci has shown in several publications the monasteries of Central Tibet in particular were frequently decorated with murals rendered either by Nepali artists directly or else in a predominantly Nepali style. Particular mention should be made of the Nör monastery founded in 1422. The chronicles tell us that five artists headed by Vaṅguli were invited from Nepal to paint the murals. Thereafter, a particularly lively school of painting seems to have thrived at the monastery, about which more will be said later.

That the history of Tibetan painting was inexorably interwoven with that of Nepali painting is also evident from the thankas themselves. However, for several reasons we are in no position to define the precise relationship between the two traditions. Despite the pioneering research undertaken by Tucci several decades ago, the study of Tibetan painting is still in its infancy. The painting tradition in Tibet developed over a period of almost a thousand years and many different schools and styles flourished in different regions, but few have been definitely identified and localized. Although thankas have come out of the country by the thousands in the last two decades or so, their exact provenance is almost impossible to determine. We will thus discuss the extent of Nepali influence upon Tibetan painting in a general manner without attempting to relate the Nepali tradition to particular Tibetan schools.

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[18] Tucci, *op. cit.*, p. 277.

Another difficulty encountered in a comparative study of this sort is that there is no simple way to determine whether a thanka was rendered in Nepal and then taken into Tibet or whether it was executed in Tibet by Newari artists. We must also remember that some of the thankas reflecting a strongly Nepali style may have been painted by a Tibetan artist who either worked with a Nepali master or simply copied a Nepali painting. Art-historically intriguing as such questions may be, it will not be possible for us to answer them here. Rather, I will simply touch upon a few such issues as I discuss a representative selection of Tibetan paintings which indubitably reflect strong influences of the Nepali pictorial tradition. It must also be remembered that Nepal was only one of a number of sources which inspired the Tibetans, first to borrow, then to assimilate, and finally to develop their own distinctive style of painting. Early Tibetan paintings, therefore, are frequently rendered in styles which combine characteristics of two or three extraneous manners, as may be seen in a group of paintings reflecting a very homogeneous and distinctive style.

VI

An unpublished thanka from the Bharat Kala Bhavan at Banaras may be cited as a typical example of this style of painting (Fig. 202). Several others rendered in the same style are known and there seems no doubt that they were painted in the same atelier. A few were first published by Tucci who firmly characterized the style as predominantly Nepali.[19] However, a comparison with two typically Nepali paubhās (Figs. 68, 70) with a similar subject matter will demonstrate how different both styles are. It is interesting to note that although the two paubhās were certainly painted in Nepal, they were intended for the Tibetan market as is evident from the Tibetan inscriptions on their backs. Nonetheless, similar paubhās must have served as the models for the Banaras thanka or others like it, although their stylistic differences are obvious. Not only are the figurative types in the Tibetan example notably different, but the grouping of the figures on either side of the central Tathāgata's head is also distinct. Equally diverse are the textile and jewelry designs, as well as the tonality of the colours. In fact, the Banaras thanka and others of the group reflect stronger influences of eleventh century manuscript illuminations from Eastern India than they do of contemporary Nepali paintings. However, no

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[19] See P. Pal, *The Art of Tibet,* p. 36 and n. 55.

Indian prototype of such paintings is known, and the closest visual parallels remain the two thirteenth century Nepali paubhās.

A striking thanka showing a dancing Vajravārāhī (Fig. 203) shares features with both the Banaras thanka just discussed and a fourteenth century Nepali paubhā, also representing Vajravārāhī (Fig. 73). That the thanka was rendered in Tibet is evident from the figures of Sakya pa monks included in both the upper and the lower registers as well as from the types of figures employed in the cemeteries. The latter are stylistically similar to those in the Banaras thanka rather than to contemporary Nepali figurative types. The central figure of the goddess Vajravārāhī, however, is quite analogous to that in the Nepali paubhā in which the red deity is also set off brilliantly against a flame aureole of yet another shade of red. Moreover, the tonalities of the reds are equally intense in both, while many of the details are executed with like preference for rich details. However, it must be pointed out that the subtle design which imparts almost a texture to Vajravārāhī's aureole in the thanka is quite different from the florid scroll pattern that fills the background in the paubhā. The Nepali influence on the artist responsible for this beautiful thanka is clear, but he also combined other aesthetic elements to create a distinctive style.

Direct Nepali influence is more readily perceptible in a large corpus of thankas, such as those depicting the life of Śākyamuni and the goddess Tārā (Figs. 204, 205) and in a sumptuously illuminated manuscript cover (Fig. 205). Both because of its size and shape, we may be certain that the cover belonged to a Tibetan rather than a Nepali manuscript. Moreover, there are at least three figures in the pantheon which represent lamas, while the donor at the lower right hand corner is definitely a Tibetan. The other figures, including the shrine in the centre, are so strongly Nepali that the artist must have belonged to that country. We have already encountered the peculiar cloud formations on which the celestial beings are delicately perched on a manuscript cover (Fig. 60), while the nimbuses, filled with ornate scroll patterns, are employed ubiquitously in fourteenth and fifteenth century Nepali paubhās.

Similarly, but for the inclusion of sixteen lamas, who may represent the sixteen arhats, one could easily consider the life of Śākyamuni (Fig. 204) as Nepali. Certainly the marginal panels depicting stories from his life are painted in typically Nepali fashion as seen in several other paubhās (Figs. 72, 74, 99). However, very likely the thanka was painted in Tibet rather than in Nepal, for the figures of Śākyamuni as well as the two Bodhisattvas, with their stiff postures, are far more typical of a particular Tibetan style than they are of Nepali painting. Similar figurative types and manner of drawing may be seen in several other examples published elsewhere,[20] but we must also assume that the artist, whether a Tibetan or a Nepali, was quite familiar with paintings from Nepal.

Several other paubhās, such as the early fifteenth century Tārā (Fig. 205), and the Mahāgaṇapati (Fig. 89), may well have been rendered in Nepal for a visiting Tibetan patron. The elaborate throne with its sumptuous *toraṇa*, the compartmentalized figures, the flaming aureoles, the use of rich reds, blue and green, the flying celestials enveloped by clouds, as well as the forms of the pillars and arches, both along the top and bottom registers, are found commonly in early fifteenth century Nepali paintings. Indeed, the only elements which are Tibetan are the monks in the upper register, one of whom even wears a red cap. As we know nothing of Sakya pa influence on fifteenth century Nepali Buddhism, and certainly no lamas are included in the Nepali pantheon, we must conclude that the paubhā was painted for a Tibetan patron. However, in view of its strongly Nepali style, it must be regarded as a painting which was intended for export. Several others, including the two earliest known paubhās (Figs. 68, 70) as well as the Cleveland Tārā (Fig. 71) may also have been export pictures. All these paubhās, it may be mentioned, do not include the usual scenes of consecration with donors, vajrācāryas, dancers and musicians, which are almost invariably present in Nepali paubhās of all periods. Tibetan thankas rarely include such elaborate consecration scenes, and only occasionally do they depict pictures of a monk or a donor seated before rows of butter lamps and other offerings.

Since the monasteries were of paramount importance in Tibetan society, it is extremely likely that groups of artists attached themselves to particular monasteries which developed peculiar styles of their own. The Banaras thanka (Fig. 202), for instance, may have been rendered by the same artists who were responsible for painting some of the murals in the Iwang monastery. However, the same basic style, in a less sophisticated version, is found as far away as Khara-khoto in Central Asia.[21] Moreover, Tucci has shown convincingly that during the seventeenth century the monastery of Tashilumpo developed a recognizable style of its own, and, in fact, as we shall discuss presently, during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, Newar merchants visiting Lhasa would invariably stop over at this well-known monastery, where they would often commission thankas. We have referred also to the textual evidence demonstrating unambiguously that in the thirteenth century the Sakya pa monks had great regard for Nepali artists, who were invited to paint and cast images for the great monasteries belonging to that sect. In fact, some of the thankas containing images of monks (Fig. 206, 207) may well have been executed by Nepali artists attached to such Sakya pa monasteries.

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[20] P. Pal, *Nepal/Where the Gods are Young*, p. 31, no. 9; Liu I-se, *op. cit.*, Fig. 23.

[21] S. Oldenburg, "Materials for Buddhist Iconography from Khara-Khoto" in *Materials for Russian Ethnography*, II, St. Petersburg, 1914, pp. 79 ff.

VII

I have already alluded to the fact that when the Nör monastery was founded in 1422 groups of artists were brought from the Kathmandu valley to decorate its walls and to fulfil other artistic needs. Although no extensive study has yet been made of the artistic remains in this monastery, frequently in books and auction catalogues paintings are either attributed to this monastery or are designated as belonging to the Nör style. This is particularly true of a large corpus of mandalas, a typical example of which is illustrated here (Fig. 207), and of a type of Mahākāla painting which is particularly attractive (Figs. 208, 209). It seems quite fashionable to attribute a Nör provenance to all Tibetan mandalas which are executed with particular finesse and which display a densely packed background filled with the intricate floral and geometrical scroll motifs that were also popular with contemporary Nepali artists. Whether or not all such mandalas were indeed painted at the Nör monastery, there is no gainsaying the fact that they are rendered in a distinctive style which do reflect Nepali features. This becomes particularly apparent if we compare such mandalas with two others which were indubitably painted in the valley in 1485 and 1490 (Figs. 93, 95).

One of the two Mahākāla thankas (Fig. 208) is remarkably similar to a Nepali paubhā of the same subject (Fig. 102). However, the paubhā was painted in the year 1543 and it remains the earliest Nepali example of this type of image to have been discovered so far. The thanka may have been rendered around the same date or may have been painted somewhat earlier. As a subsidiary figure, Mahākāla is included in several earlier Nepali paintings in which he is sometimes shown as standing (Fig. 79) and in others (Fig. 81) as squatting. The earliest known Nepali representation of the standing Makāhāla occurs in the 1367 *Prajñāpāramitā* manuscript. Thus, if indeed this particular type of thanka, in which Mahākāla is surrounded by four figures—one of whom is Lha-mo—was popular with Nör artists, it may have been invented there, for no possible Nepali prototype has yet surfaced.

Despite their strong similarities, there are certain other differences between the Tibetan representation (Fig. 209) and the 1543 paubhā (Fig. 102). Usually in such Nepali pictures, Mahākāla is depicted as standing in a fairly erect posture, but in most Tibetan examples he is portrayed in a sort of a semi-squatting posture. Furthermore, Lha-mo, it may be recalled, is not a member of either the Nepali or the Indian Buddhist pantheon so that if the Tibetan Mahākāla thanka did have a Nepali prototype it is hardly likely to have included Lha-mo. As is usual, figures of Tibetan lamas are represented in the thanka along the top and no consecration scenes are delineated below. In both sixteenth century Nepali examples (Figs. 102, 103) there are no images of lamas and the scenes of consecration at the bottom are clearly present. However, the crowded cemetery scenes occur in a similar fashion as in early paubhās which were unquestionably painted in Nepal.

More curious is the other Mahākāla thanka (Fig. 209), which has an altogether different flavour. The five principal figures, along with the scavenging birds and animals, are delicately set off against an enormous, billowing aureole filled with tiny flames which are quite different from those in more typical Mahākāla thankas. The pattern, in fact, is closer to that decorating the background of the Vajravārāhī thanka already discussed (Fig. 203). The cemeteries, each presided by a Dikpāla along with his consort, are rendered with remarkable clarity and spaciousness. The figures are especially lithe and graceful and reflect the suave elegance of those in early Nepali manuscript illuminations. At the same time, the composition has the sparse and airy quality encountered in certain types of Tibetan thankas which are said to have been painted in the Karma-gadri style.[22] The large lotus petals reveal the same sort of stylization found in bronzes of the fifteenth century or later, while the rock formations below the lotus are unknown in any early Tibetan thankas. The rocks seem to be a horizontally oriented version of those in earlier Nepali manuscript illuminations (Figs. 52, 54). Rather curious is a bearded and turbaned man, wearing a long coat and brandishing a dagger, as if he is about to attack the figure to the right of the central Ḍākinī in the bottom register. Once again, this turbaned personage is rather similar to others occurring in thankas attributed generally to the sixteenth or seventeenth centuries, but there is no reason why such figures could not have existed earlier.

Whatever the date of the thanka, it is strongly influenced by the Nepali tradition. More importantly, it appears to be a unique example of a school of Tibetan painting which cannot be ascertained until others like it are discovered. That the artist responsible for it was a strong individualist is self-evident, for he has consciously deviated from the more typical Mahākāla paintings and has given us a refreshing and delightful composition which is both lucid and compelling. Especially admirable is the courage and self-assurance with which he has enveloped his figures with empty spaces, an effect he may have acquired by observing Chinese paintings.

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[22] Cf. Pal, *Art of Tibet*, no. 16; colour plate facing p. 14.

Mention should also be made of at least one other kind of Tibetan thanka which may have had a Nepali or even an Indian prototype. A common type of Tibetan portrait paintings (Fig. 210), especially popular among the Sakya pa sect, shows two eminent monks seated on thrones and turned towards one another as they engage in conversation. They are surrounded by a large number of other members of the Sakya pa hierarchy, selected mahāsiddhas and associated deities, each represented within a medallion formed by interconnected lotus stems. Although there are several earlier examples of this type of composition from Tibet,[23] it is significant that at least one Nepali paubhā (Fig. 78) has now emerged indicating the familiarity of this kind of painting in the valley. It must be noted, though, that Indian prototypes for such confronting couples engaged in conversation go back to at least the fifth-sixth century,[24] and so do Chinese steles showing the same basic configuration and composition.[25] The idea of enclosing figures within medallions may also be seen in at least one Nepali paubhā (Fig. 92), although this particular design, used in several paintings of Guge in Western Tibet, may well have been borrowed from Kashmiri art.

Nepali influence was not confined only to the monasteries of Central Tibet, but is also perceptible in the Guge style of paintings, which, however, is more closely related to the Kashmiri school. A typical Guge thanka (Fig. 211) is an amalgam of several stylistic elements, but its crowded composition, architectural details, the preponderance of red and the figurative types do remind us of such Nepali paintings as the Restoration of Svayambhūnātha (Fig. 108). The murals adorning some of the Western Tibetan monasteries, such as Tsaparang, Tabo and others, as well as

[23] Liu I-se, *op. cit.*, Fig. 17, which is dated as early as A.D. 1039. See also H. Karmay, *Early Sino-Tibetan Art*, Warminster, 1975, p. 50. The Jisha illustrations published in this book also reflect Nepali influences. As one notices in the bronzes, Buddhist paintings in China during the fourteenth century may also have been influenced by the Nepali pictorial tradition, perhaps due to the presence of A-ni-ko.

[24] For example, the Nara-Nārāyaṇa panel at Deogarh, see S. K. Saraswati, *A Survey of Indian Sculpture*, Calcutta, 1957, pl. XXVII, Fig. 120; P. Pal, "Notes on Two Sculptures of the Gupta Period" in *Archives of Asian Art*, XXIV, (1970-71), p. 77, Fig. 3.

[25] Cf. P. Swann, *Art of China, Korea and Japan*, London, 1963, Fig. 54; S. Lee, *A History of Far Eastern Art*, Engelwood Cliffs and New York, n d , Figs 167-168.

those in Ladakh, such as Alchi,[26] are also rendered in a strongly figurative and synthetic style which combines traits from both the Nepali and the Kashmiri traditions.

VIII

Thus, there seems no doubt that the Tibetan pictorial tradition of the period between the fourteenth and the sixteenth centuries, and possibly of the earlier period as well, was strongly influenced by Nepali paintings. As mentioned previously, after about 1200, following the destruction of the Eastern Indian and Kashmiri monasteries, Tibetans turned increasingly to Nepal for religious inspiration, and it is only natural that visiting Tibetan monks and pilgrims returning from the Kathmandu valley should carry back with them paubhās made especially to suit their own spiritual needs. Many such paubhās have survived and apparently there was a flourishing export trade for images created in Nepal. It may also be surmised that on their arrival in Tibet these paubhās served as models for local artists, whether they were Newari or Tibetan. Finally, we know that Nepali artists were in great demand in Tibetan monasteries, especially among the Sakya pas, and while they could not be expected to forget their native styles and manners altogether, they certainly must have modified their styles to suit the tastes and proclivities of the local patrons. In this sense, patronage has always exerted some pressure, no matter how conservative and sacrosanct a given style or tradition was.

By the seventeenth century Buddhism in Nepal was already declining and the monasteries of Patan and Kathmandu were no longer esteemed as seats of learning and religious inspiration as they were in an earlier age. Tibet, on the other hand, had now become a Buddhist state, and the institution of Dalai lama was acquiring a reverence and mystique unparalleled in any other country. The Tibetan monasteries and monks had already begun to play a dominant role in China from as far back as the thirteenth century. Religion in much of the northern and western Himalayas too was now heavily influenced by Tibetan Buddhism, known also as Lamaism. While the monasteries in the Kathmandu Valley remained under the jurisdiction of the vajrācāryas, Newar merchants who went to trade in Tibet made it a point to visit important Tibetan monasteries and in particular that known as Tashilumpo. Invariably also they would commission and consecrate thankas in Tibetan monasteries and bring them back to Nepal as precious souvenirs. A large corpus of such paintings has survived and fortunately many of them bear dedicatory inscriptions. A typical inscription informs us that a merchant, usually of metal (*tāmrakāra*), went to Lhasa to trade and while there visited the Tashilumpo monastery where he commissioned and consecrated the painting. The style of these pictures is distinctly Tibetan, although the subject matter often is typically Nepali, such as the Pañcarakṣā goddesses, forms of Avalokiteśvara, the Uṣṇīṣavijayā caitya or Vasudhārā-mandala.

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[26] M. Singh, *Himalayan Art*, pp 38-39.

Thus a flourishing centre for export paintings must have existed at least in the Tashilumpo monastery. The earliest example of such an export thanka seems to be the 1662 Pañcarakṣā in the British Museum (Fig. 213). Two other thankas, depicting Vasudhārā and Sahasrabhūja Lokeśvara (Figs. 214, 215), were consecrated in the years 1689 and 1695 respectively. However, the majority belongs to the eighteenth and the nineteenth centuries and a few typical examples are illustrated here (Figs. 216-218). Following the Tibetan convention some of the paintings include no portraits of the donors, but others do so as to suit the Nepali taste. In an early eighteenth century thanka (Fig. 216) a couple dressed in a typically Nepali fashion is added to the left of the lotus pedestal on which the deity stands. More frequently, in nineteenth century examples, we come across rows of figures added at the bottom in a stereotyped manner. Obviously some Newari patrons preferred the inclusion of such representations in the paintings they commissioned and the Tibetan artists were not about to disappoint them.

As mentioned previously the introduction of such paintings in the Kathmandu Valley had a considerable impact upon the Nepali tradition. The most fundamental influence may be perceived in the sudden introduction of mountains with snowy peaks in late seventeenth century Nepali paintings. Although the Nepali artists did not imitate the exact forms of the hills and rock formations seen in contemporary thankas, the basic idea of a mountainous landscape was borrowed from Tibetan paintings which had developed a distinct style of its own by the seventeenth century. Among other features adopted were dragons (Fig. 212) and forms of clouds, flying scarves, heavier garments (Fig. 214), floral patterns, such as the peony-like lotus on thrones (Fig. 213), Tibetan figurative types and, finally, a penchant for bright and gaudy colours, of which the Tibetans were particularly fond. However, as always, apart from the idea of using elements of landscape, the Nepali artists generally borrowed particular motifs which they combined with features taken from contemporary Rajput pictures to create a stylistic synthesis of their own. The flight of fantasy combined with a visionary quality which gives Tibetan landscape paintings of this period a distinctively expressive character seems to have had little or no effect upon the imagination of the Nepali artists; rather, they preferred the quiet lyrical elegance of contemporary Rajput paintings. Thus, India remained in the end, as it was in the beginning, the primary stylistic and iconographic source for the Nepali pictorial tradition.

रवि शाक्य

APPENDIX

After this book was sent to the press, two very important documents for the history of Nepali painting came to my attention. One of them consists of a sketchbook in the manner of a folding manuscript. The dedicatory inscription states that in the year N.S. 555/1435 A.D. a certain Jivarāma went to Bhoṭa (Tibet) and after making inquiries with local people prepared this sketchbook. In particular, a certain Lalachunava was of great help to Jivarāma and he completed the work on his return to Nepal.

The book consists of a large number of black and white drawings of different deities, such as Mahākāla and Lha-mo, the arhats, the mahāsiddhas, architectural details and decorative motifs such as floral and geometric patterns (Fig. 219). Some of the figures are identified by Newari inscriptions, as is the case with the folios illustrated here, others by both Newari and Tibetan notations, while some have no identifying labels at all. What is of particular interest is that while some of the ornamental designs are employed in Nepali paintings, by and large all the drawings, whether of the figures or of architectural details, belong to the Tibetan artist's repertoire. Obviously Jivarāma was especially interested in Tibetan art and perhaps had a large Tibetan clientele. Rarely, if ever, are the forms and figures contained in the sketchbook encountered in paintings intended for domestic consumption in Nepal. It thus seems clear that many of the paintings which are commonly regarded as Tibetan may actually have been rendered by artists such as Jivarāma working in Nepal with the aid of sketchbooks such as that under discussion. For example, as I have indicated in the text, the beautiful paubhā of Mahāgaṇapati (Fig. 89) may, in fact, have been painted in Nepal, perhaps even by Jivarāma himself, for a Tibetan patron. While basically it is delineated in a predominantly Nepali style, the artist included a number of features which obviously were intended to satisfy a Tibetan patron.

The art-historical importance of this document hardly needs any emphasis. It is the first artist's sketchbook to have come to light from either Nepal or Tibet. Not only is it significant for the study of the inter-relationship between the artistic traditions of Nepal and Tibet, but it also demonstrates conclusively that artists in ancient Nepal did not depend entirely on their memory and verbal models, but did resort to visual models in the forms of sketchbooks. Jivarāma was, of course, an accomplished artist for his sketches are firmly drawn, the faces in particular being remarkably lively and sensitive portrayals.

This fascinating sketchbook is in the collection of Mr. S. K. Neotia of Calcutta and has recently been published at length by Mr. John Lowry ("A Fifteenth Century Sketchbook" (preliminary study) in *Essais sur l'art du Tibet*, Paris, 1977, pp. 83-118).

The second example is a magnificent paubhā (Fig. 220) with a long dedicatory inscription recording the performance of the *tulādāna* ceremony by King Pratāpamalla of Kathmandu in the year 1664. Significantly, the paubhā was commissioned by Pratāpamalla himself and the artist employed must have been a master, as is also evident from the exceptionally fine quality of the painting.

The ceremony is being performed by the king himself, dressed in splendid Mughal-Rajput attire, in front of the well-known Taleju temple attached to the Hanumandhoka palace in Kathmandu. The rendering of the temple is remarkably detailed and accurate and especially charming are the hundreds of pidgeons that crowd the golden roofs of the temple. In the lower left-hand corner, the artist has given us astonishingly spirited studies of gaily caparisoned elephants in the finest Mughal manner of the Shah Jahan period. Indeed, both in terms of the composition, which is vaguely reminiscent of Mughal Durbar scenes, as well as the sumptuousness of colouring, there seems little doubt that the artist was more than familiar with contemporary Mughal paintings from India. However, that he was a local artist seems clear from the manner in which he has treated the landscape, the cloud designs above and the general figurative types. A detailed study of this extraordinary painting will not be possible in this appendix, but there can be little doubt that it establishes firmly the fact that the new interest in the Mughal-Rajput tradition of India was primarily the result of the remarkably versatile and innovative personality of King Pratāpamalla of Kathmandu.

The present whereabouts of this painting is not known, but I examined it at the Kumar Gallery in Paris in the spring of 1977. The transparency was kindly supplied to me by Mr. Kumar.

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149. Lailā and Majnun, India, Kulu, ca. 1725, H. 16 cm., W. 11.4 cm. Victoria and Albert Museum.
150. Section from a Kinnarī Jātaka scroll, ca. 1725, H. 40 cm., W. 385 cm. Prince of Wales Museum.
151. Scroll depicting story of Śroṇakoṭikarṇa, 1721 or earlier, H. 38 cm., W. 471 cm. The National Museum, New Delhi.
152. Illustration from a *Devīmāhātmya*, ca. 1700, H. 11.4 cm. Los Angeles County Museum of Art, Gift of Paul Walter.
153. Viṣṇu saves the elephant king, from a *Bhāgavata Purāṇa*, ca. 1750, H. 34.3 cm., W. 53.4 cm. The Royal Asiatic Society, London.
154. Section of a scroll depicting Śriṅgaverī Avadāna, ca. 1775-1800, H. 64.8 cm., W. 9 m 30.2 cm. Los Angeles County Museum of Art. County Purchase and Gift of Mrs. Joan Palevsky.
155. Another section of scroll in Fig. 154.
156. Story extolling *Ekādaśīvrata*, ca. 1800, H. 48.2 cm., W. 132.1 cm. Zimmerman Collection.

157. Stories extolling Aṣṭamīvrata and Vasudhārāvrata, 1805, H. 2 m. 87 cm., W. 2 m. 90 cm. David Tremayne, Ltd.
158. Section of a scroll depicting story extolling Anantavrata, ca. 1800. H. 60.2 cm., W. 8 m. 20 cm. Bharat Kala Bhavan.
159. Another section of scroll in Fig. 158.
160. Murals depicting the *Devīmāhātmya*, ca. 1835, Hanumandhoka Palace, Kathmandu.
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162. Section of a scroll depicting Vessantara Jātaka, 1837, H. 38 cm., W. 74.5 cm. Museum für Indische Kunst, Berlin.
163. Murals depicting stories from the *Rāmāyaṇa*, ca. 1850. Hanumandhoka Palace, Kathmandu.
164. View of Kathmandu Valley, Scroll, ca. 1850. Kwa Bahal, Patan.
165. Festival in the River, Painting on cloth, ca. 1800; H. 2 m. 62 cm., W. 3 m. 5 cm. David Tremayne, Ltd.
166. Detail of Fig. 165.
167. Kṛṣṇa aids Sudhanva, Illustration from a *Bhāgavata Purāṇa*, ca. 1800, H. 38.1 cm., W. 55.9 cm. W. G. Archer Collection, London.
168. Palace of Samvara, from the same set as Fig. 167. Los Angeles County Museum of Art, Gift of Mr. and Mrs. Ed Wiener.
169. Prasena being killed by a lion, from the same set as Figs. 167, 168. Private Collection.
170. Viṣṇu saves king of elephants, Illustration from a *Bhāgavata Purāṇa*, ca. A.D. 1850, H. 35.6 cm., W. 29.8 cm. Private Collection.
171. Illustration from a *Bhāgavata Purāṇa*, ca. 1875, H. 35.6 cm., W. 45.7 cm. Private Collection.
172. Viṣṇu in the cosmic ocean, ca. 1875, H. 36.8 cm., W. 31.1 cm. Private Collection.
173. Cover depicting scene from a secular story, 13th century, Neotia Collection.
174. Detail of Fig. 173.
175. Detail of Fig. 173.
176. Three Pages from a *Hitopadeśa* ms., 1594, each page, H. 6.7 cm., W. 22.2 dm. The National Library, Kathmandu.
177. Illustration from a *Pañcatantra* ms., ca. 1600, J. P. Goenka Collection, Calcutta.
178. Scenes of Hunting with King Hāla, from a Kalāpustaka, ca. 1600. University Library, Cambridge.

179. Horses, from the same Kalāpustaka as Fig. 178.
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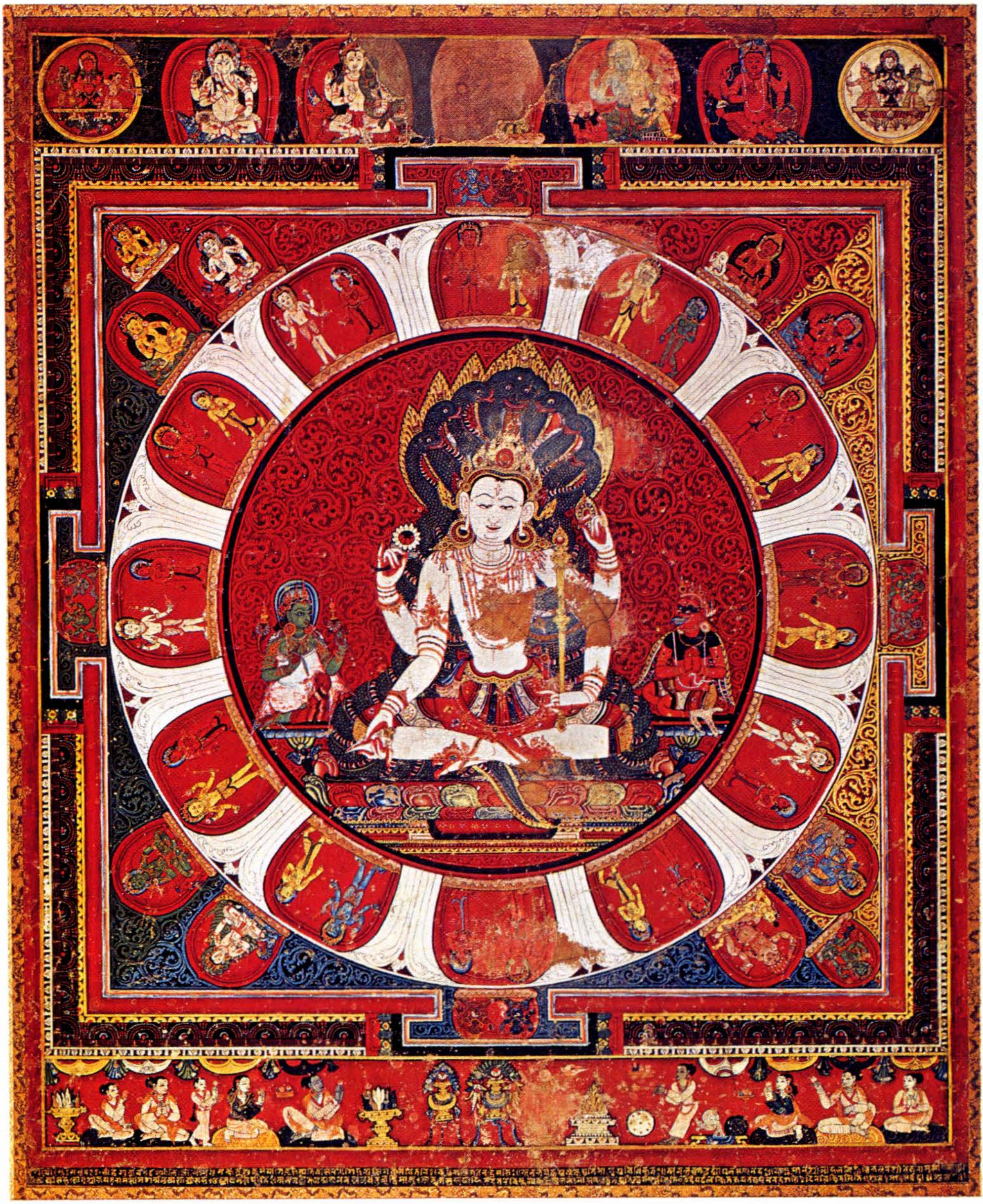
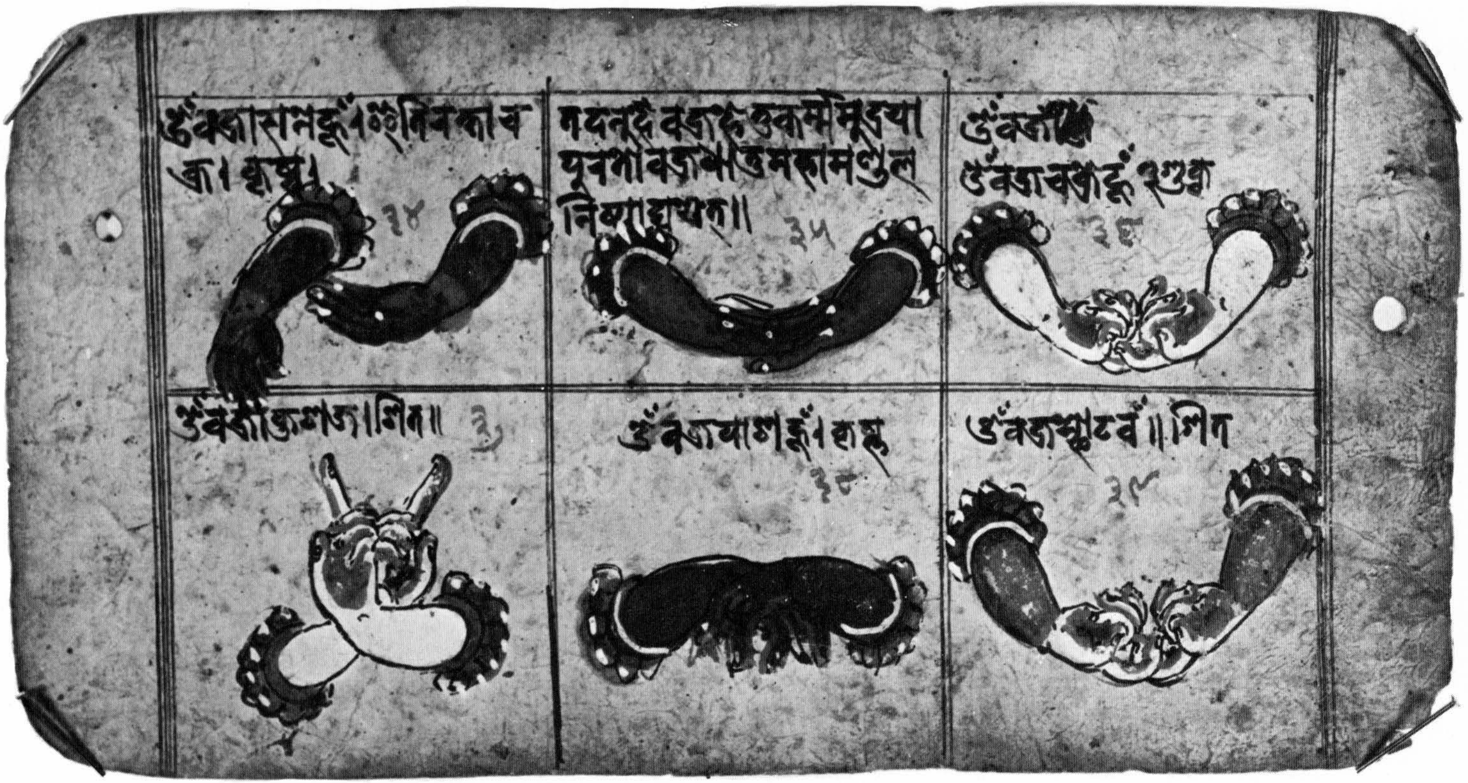
181. Abhisārikā Nāyikā, from a *Rāgamālā* set, ca. 1650, H. 17.9 cm., W. 14.3 cm. Los Angeles County Museum of Art.
182. Kocakarī rāgiṇī, from the same set as Fig. 181. Norton Simon Collection.
183. Mallāra rāga, from the same set as Fig. 181, Norton Simon Collection.
184. Brahmā, ca. 1600, H. 63.5 cm. Museum of Fine Arts, Boston.
185. Detail from a *Babur-nameh,* India, Mughal, 1600-1605. The British Museum.
186. Folio from an Erotic album, ca. 1700. H. 18 cm., W. 18 cm. Victoria and Albert Museum.
187. Vihagada rāga, India, Kulu, 1700-1710, H. 15.8 cm., W. 15.7 cm. Victoria and Albert Museum.
188. Self-portrait of Tejarāma, detail from Fig. 1.
189. King Jagajjyotirmalla and Queen Kamalādevī, From a *Devīmāhātmya* ms. 1610, H. 5.7 cm. Prince of Wales Museum, Bombay.
190. King Pratāpamalla, detail from Fig. 113.
191. King Śrīnivāsamalla and Viśvanātha Upādhyāya, 1681-84, from the same cover as Fig. 63.
192. King Jitāmitramalla and others, 1681, detail from Fig. 115. Los Angeles County Museum of Art.
193. King Bhupatīndramalla, 1696-1721, Mural in Bhadgaon Palace.
194. King Prakāśamalla, from a Kalāpustaka, ca. 1765, Bharat Kala Bhavan, Banaras.
195. King Gīrvāṇa Yuddhavikrama Shāh, ca. 1800, H. 17.4 cm., W. 12.5 cm. Freer Gallery of Art, Washington, D.C.
196. Section of a Scroll Depicting History of Itum baha, 18th century, Itum baha, Kathmandu.
197. A Queen deified as Lakshmī (?), 19th century, Private Collection.
198. Apotheosized Portrait (?), 19th century, Present location unknown.
199. Kṛṣṇa and Rādhā, Mural, 19th century, Thapathali, Patan.
200. Illustration of a verse from the *Vasantavilāsa*, India, 1451/52, Freer Gallery of Art.
201. Illustration from a *Gītagovinda*, India, ca. 1550, H. 15.3 cm., Prince of Wales Museum.

202. Vairocana and acolytes, Tibet, 13th-14th century, H. 137 cm. Bharat Kala Bhavan.
203. Vajravārāhī and other Deities, Tibet, ca. 1300, H. 83.8 cm. Private Collection.
204. Life of Śākyamuni, Nepal or Tibet, 14th century, H. 52.4 cm. George P. Bickford Collection.
205. Goddess Tārā and other Deities, Nepal or Tibet, 15th century, H. 57.2 cm. Zimmerman Collection.
206. Manuscript Cover, Tibet, ca. 1400, H. 24.8 cm., W. 68.5 cm. From the Nasli and Alice Heeramaneck Collection, Los Angeles County Museum of Art.
207. Hevajramandala, Tibet, 16th century, H. 55.9 cm. Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, John Golet Collection.
208. Mahākāla, Tibet, 15th century, H. 88.3 cm. From the Nasli and Alice Heeramaneck Collection, Los Angeles County Museum of Art.
209. Mahākāla, Tibet, 15th century (?), H. 55.9 cm. Poster Collection, New York.
210. Monks and Deities, Tibet, 16th century, H. 1 m. 34.7 cm. From the Nasli and Alice Heeramaneck Collection, Los Angeles County Museum of Art.
211. Paradise of Akṣobhya, Tibet, Guge School, 15th century, H. 1 m. 48.5 cm. From the Nasli and Alice Heeramaneck Collection, Los Angeles County Museum of Art.
212. Pañcarakṣā Goddesses, Tibet, 1662, H. 72.4 cm. The British Museum.
213. Covers of a manuscript, 1659, H. 8.8 cm., W. 37.5 cm. Edwin Binney 3rd Collection.
214. Vasudhārā, Tibet, 1689, H. 62.5 cm. Prince of Wales Museum.
215. Thousand-armed Avalokiteśvara, Tibet, 1695, H. 98 cm. Bharat Kala Bhavan.
216. Amoghapāśa Lokeśvara, Tibet, 18th century, H. 87 cm. The British Museum.
217. Buddhist mandala, Tibet, 1805, H. 115 cm. The Denver Art Museum.
218. Paradise of Amitābha, by Bhimanara Singh, 1790, H. 74.9 cm. Jim Singer Collection, Los Angeles.
219. Folios from a Sketchbook by Jivarāma, 1435, Neotia Collection.
220. Pratāpamalla performing Tulādāna ceremony, 1664, Kumar Gallery, Paris.

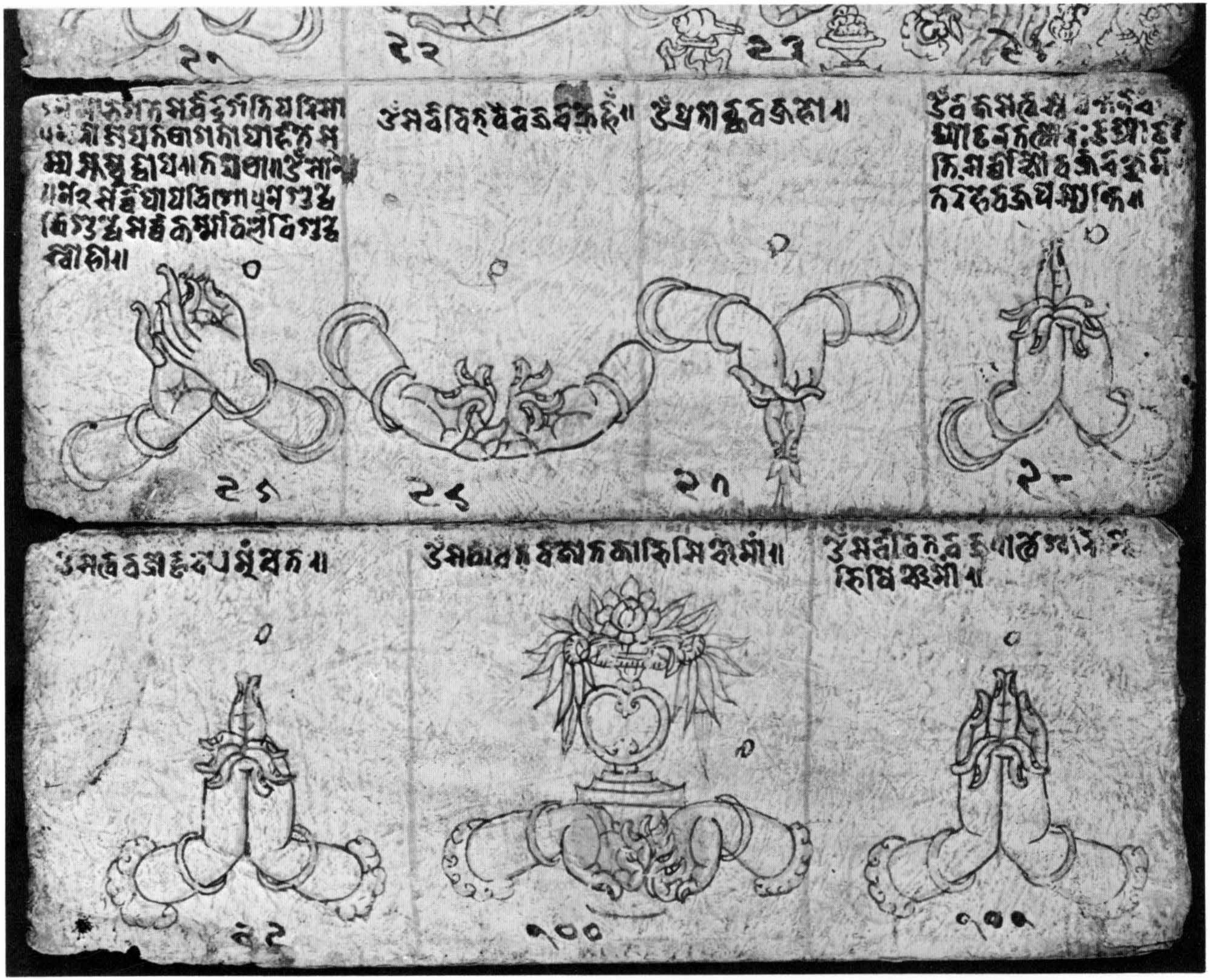
PLATES



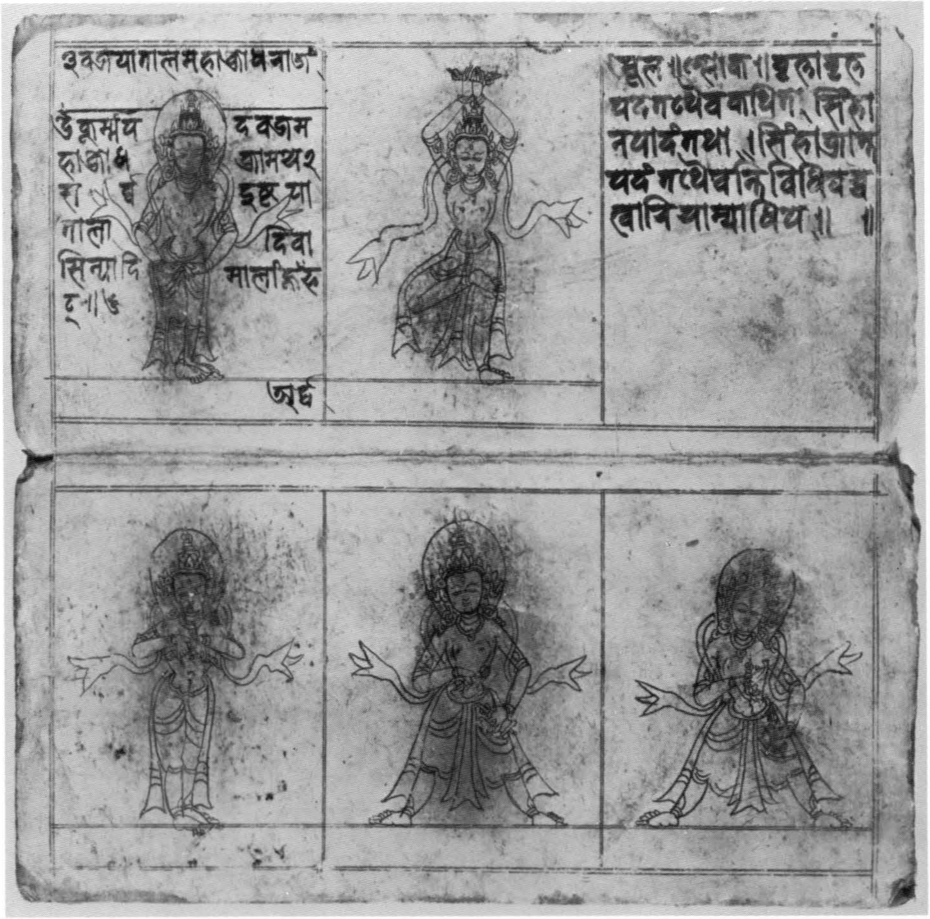
1. Viṣṇumandala by Tejarāma, 1420, H. 74.3 cm. From the Nasli and Alice Heeramaneck Collection, Los Angeles County Museum of Art.



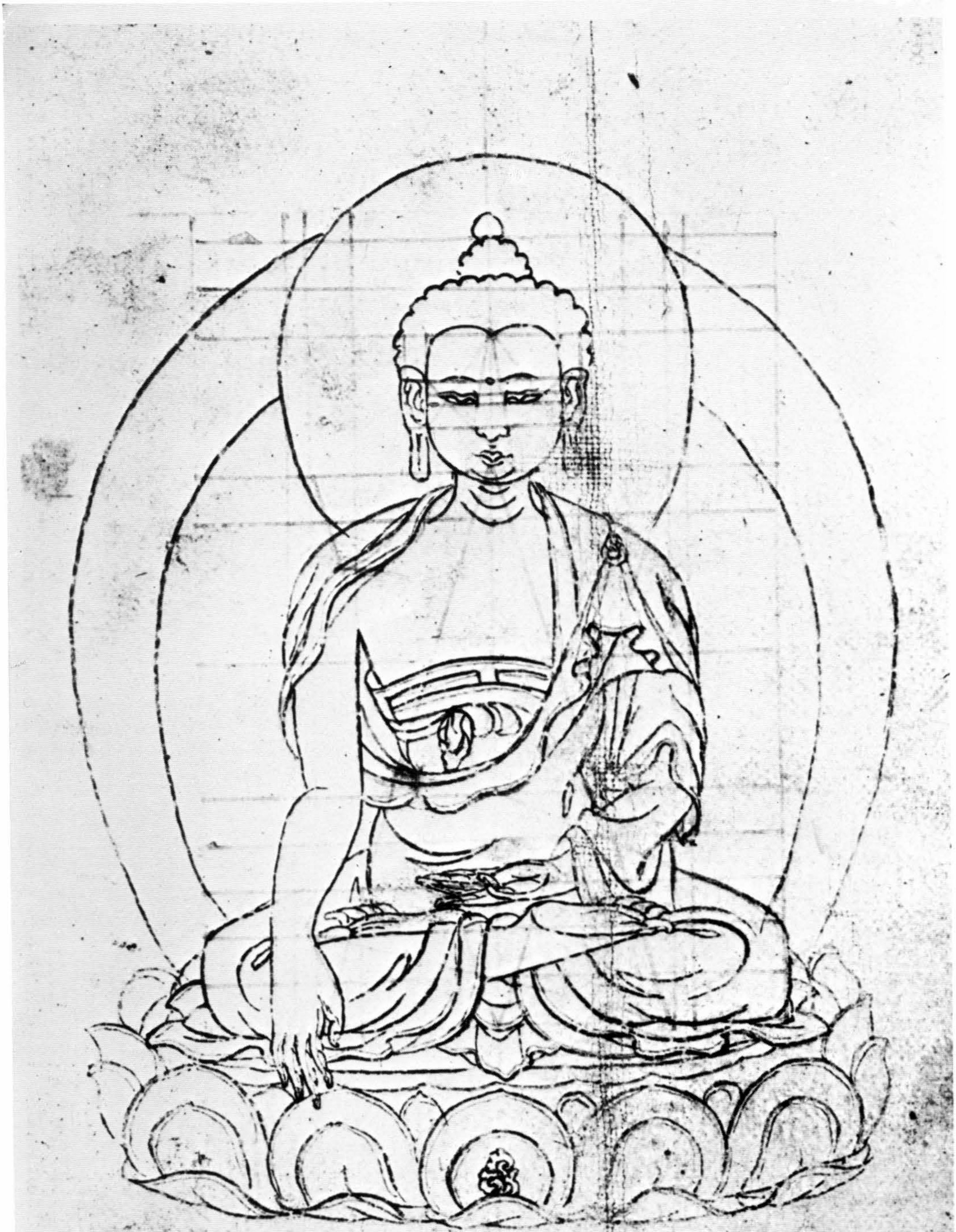
2. Painted sketches of hands, 1605, H. 9.5 cm., Denver Art Museum.



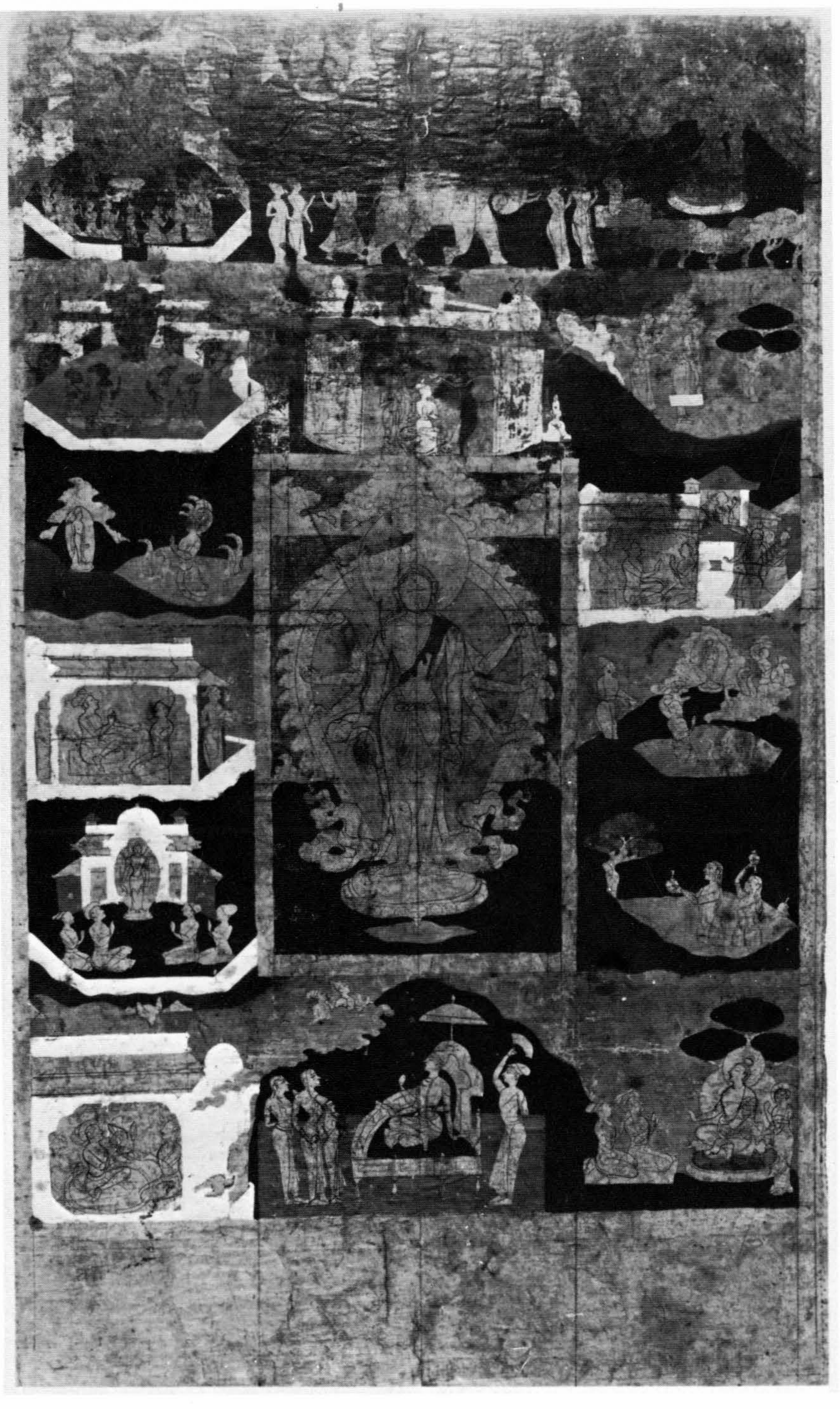
3. Drawings of hands, 17th century, each page, H. 7 cm. Jerry David Collection, San Francisco.



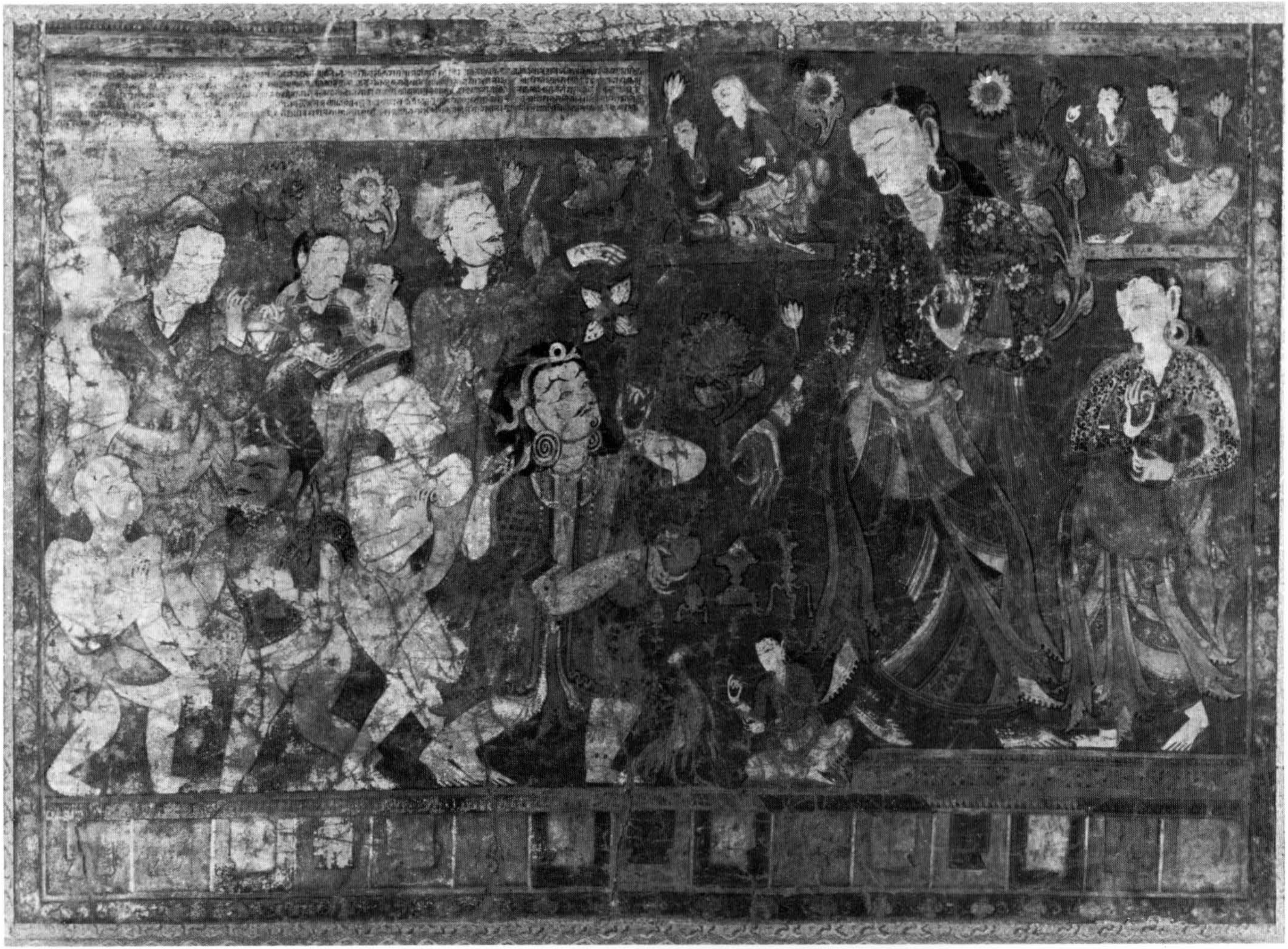
4. Drawings of Deities, 17th century, each page, H. 6 cm. The Royal Library, Copenhagen.



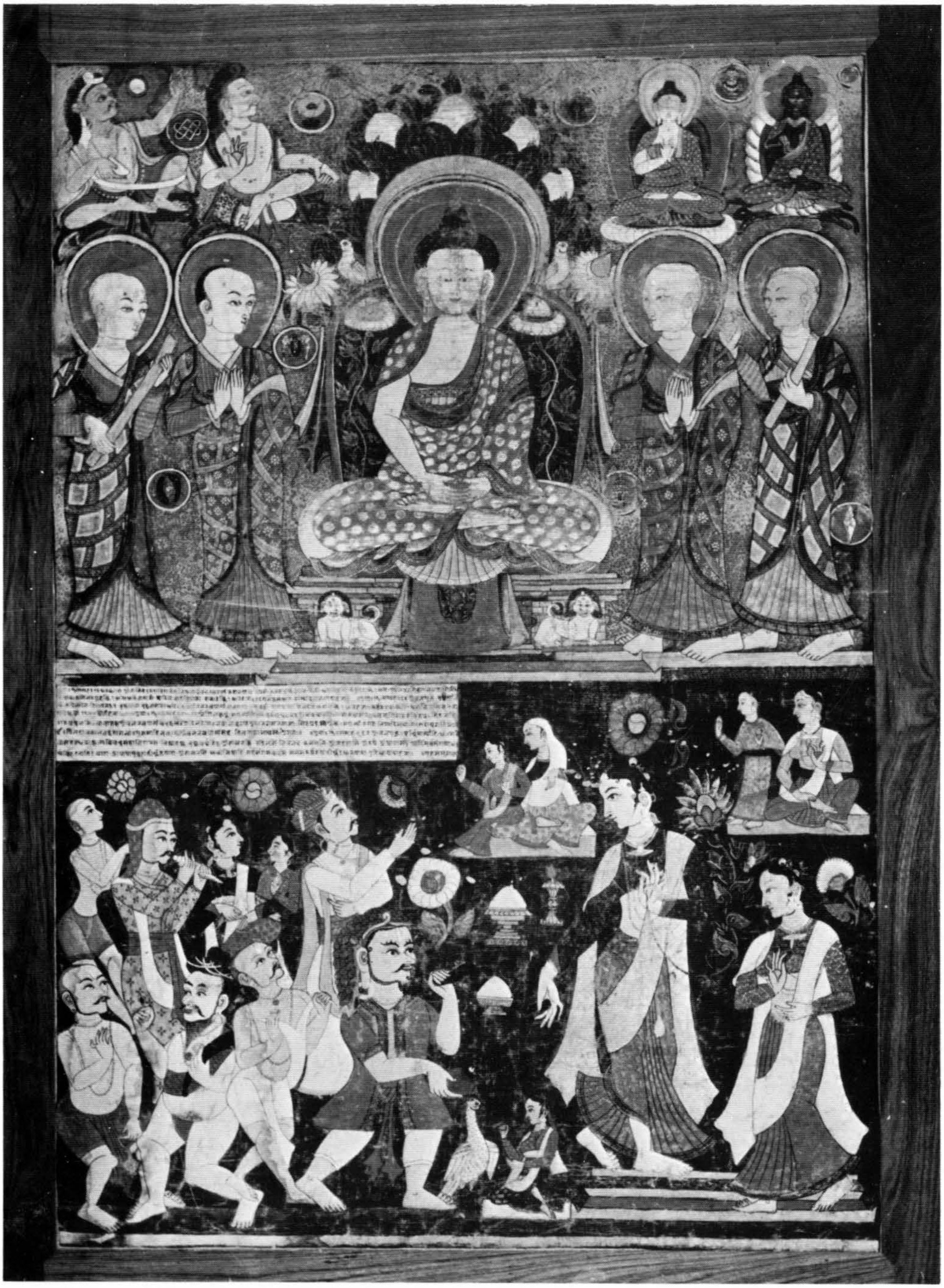
5. Drawing of the Buddha, Nepal or Tibet, 18th century, H. 13.2 cm., Rijksmuseum voor Volkenkunde, Leiden.



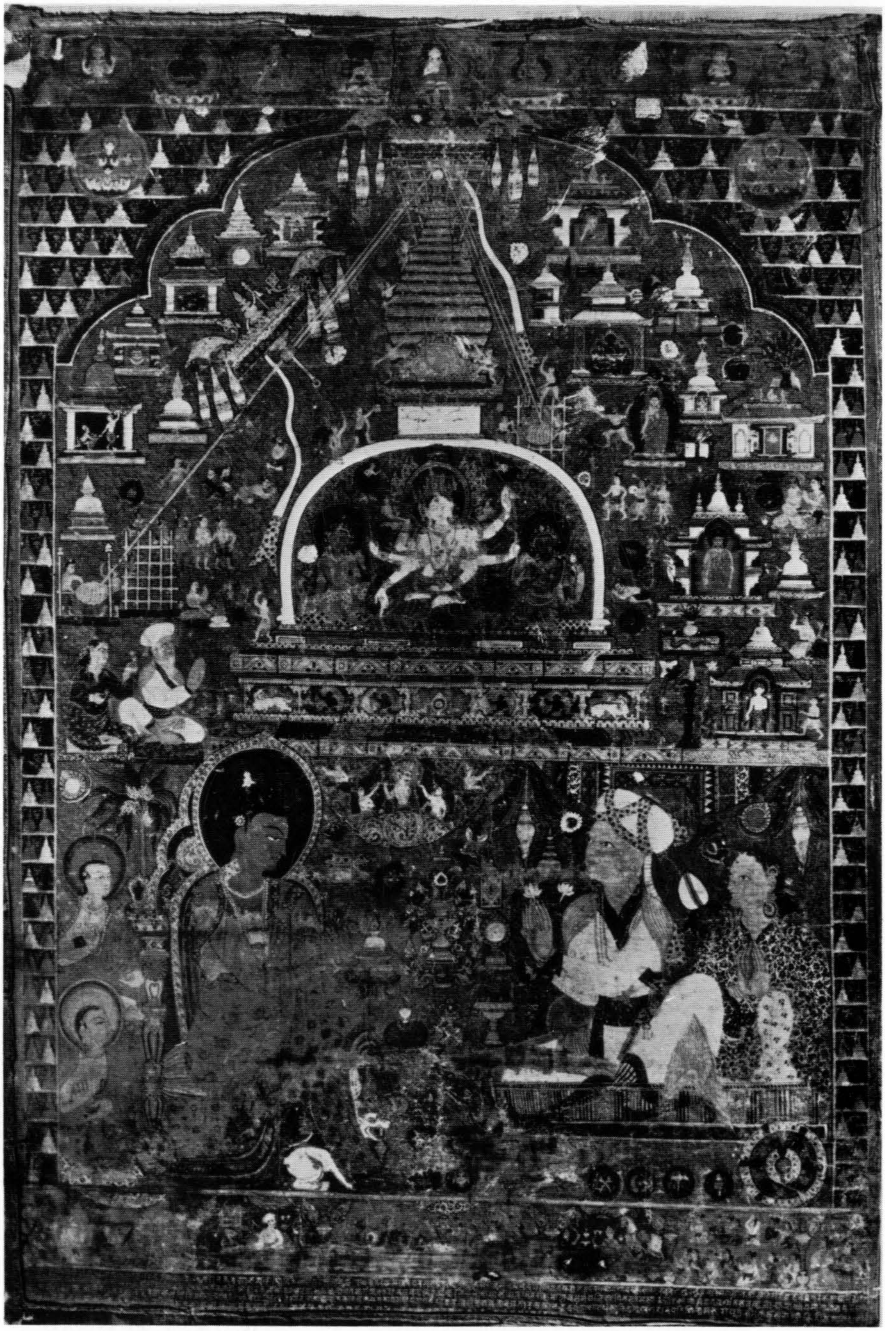
6. Unfinished Paubhā of Amoghapāśa, 1807, Reverse of Fig. 127, H. 129.5 cm. Victoria and Albert Museum, London.



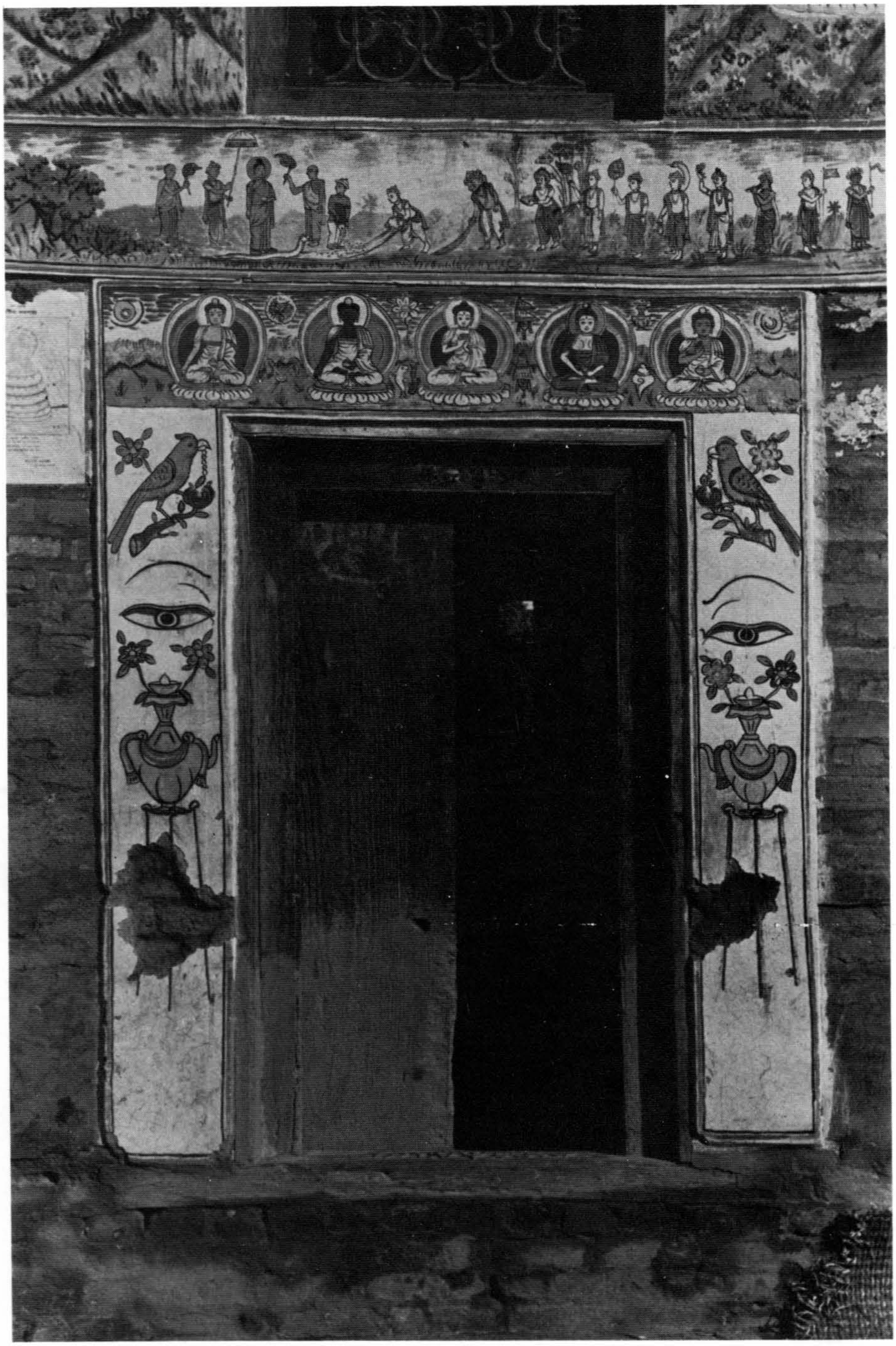
7. Vanaratna's Wife distributing alms, 1469, H. 72 cm. From the Nasli and Alice Heeramaneck Collection, Los Angeles County Museum of Art.



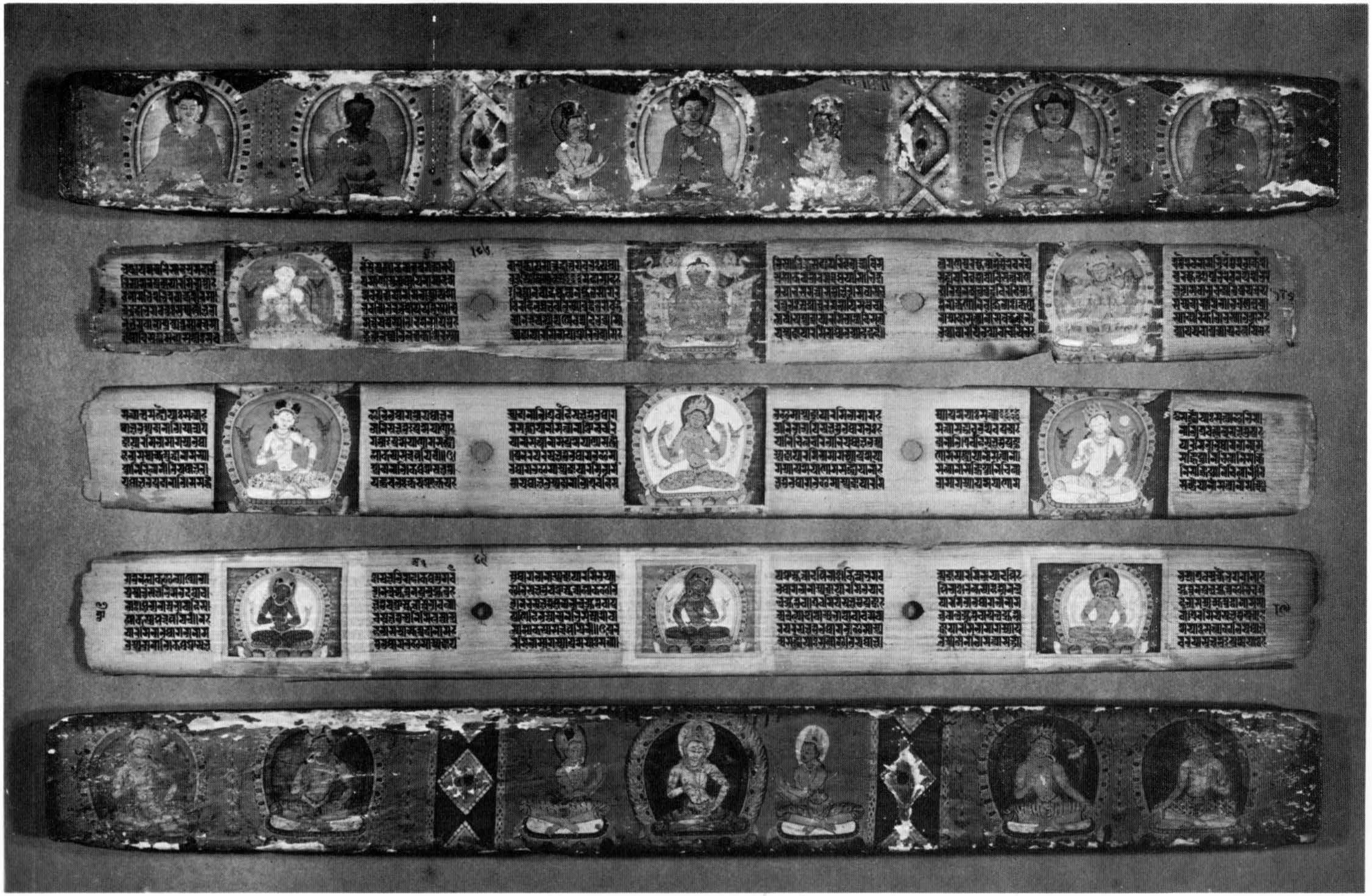
8. Tathāgata Kanakamuni and Lady distributing alms, 1842, H. 109 cm. Bharat Kala Bhavan, Banaras.



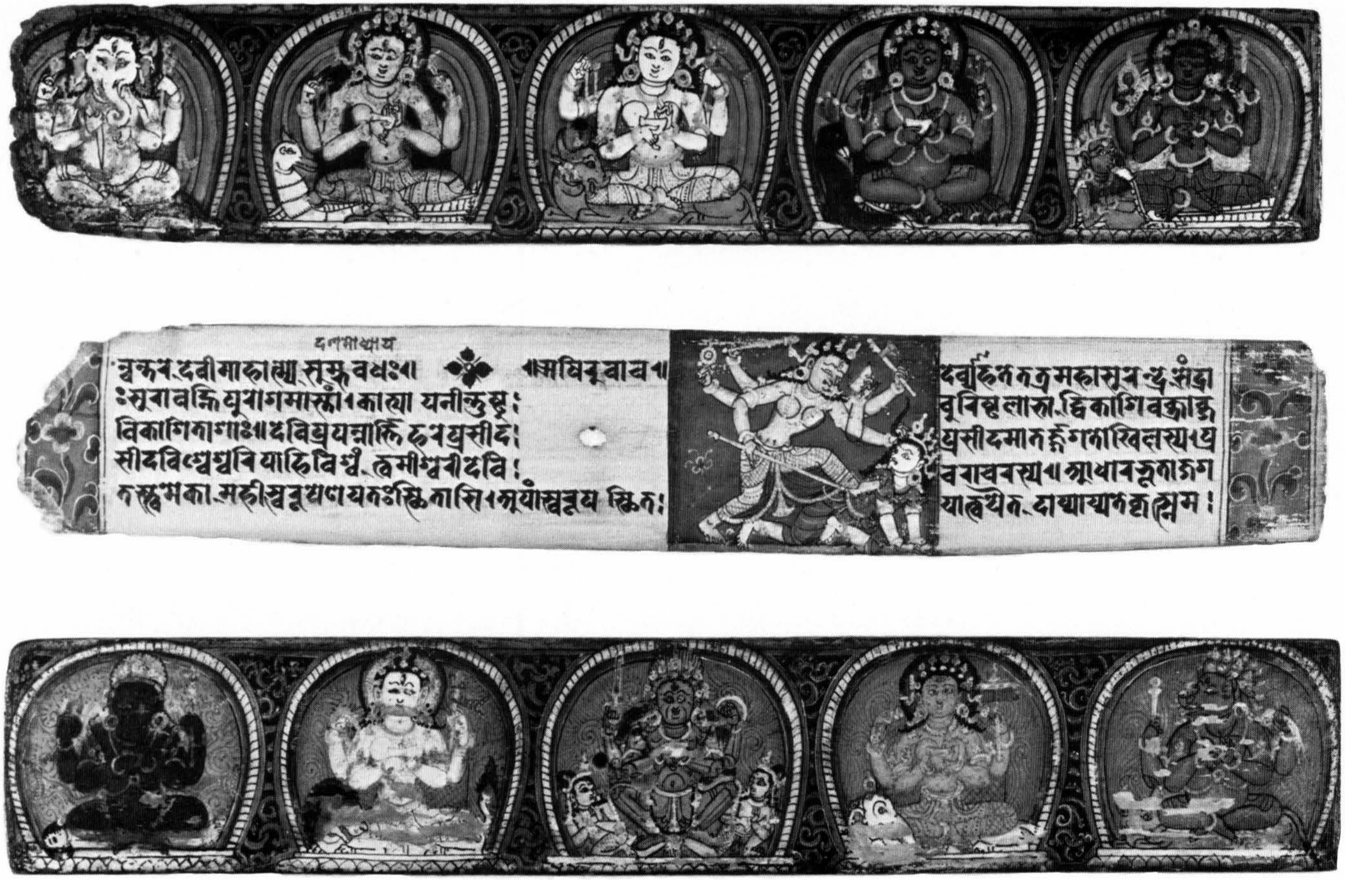
9. Prakulideva performing Bhīmaratha rite by Ratnasimha, 1664, H. 1 m. 52 cm.
Mrs. Sumitra Charat Ram, New Delhi.



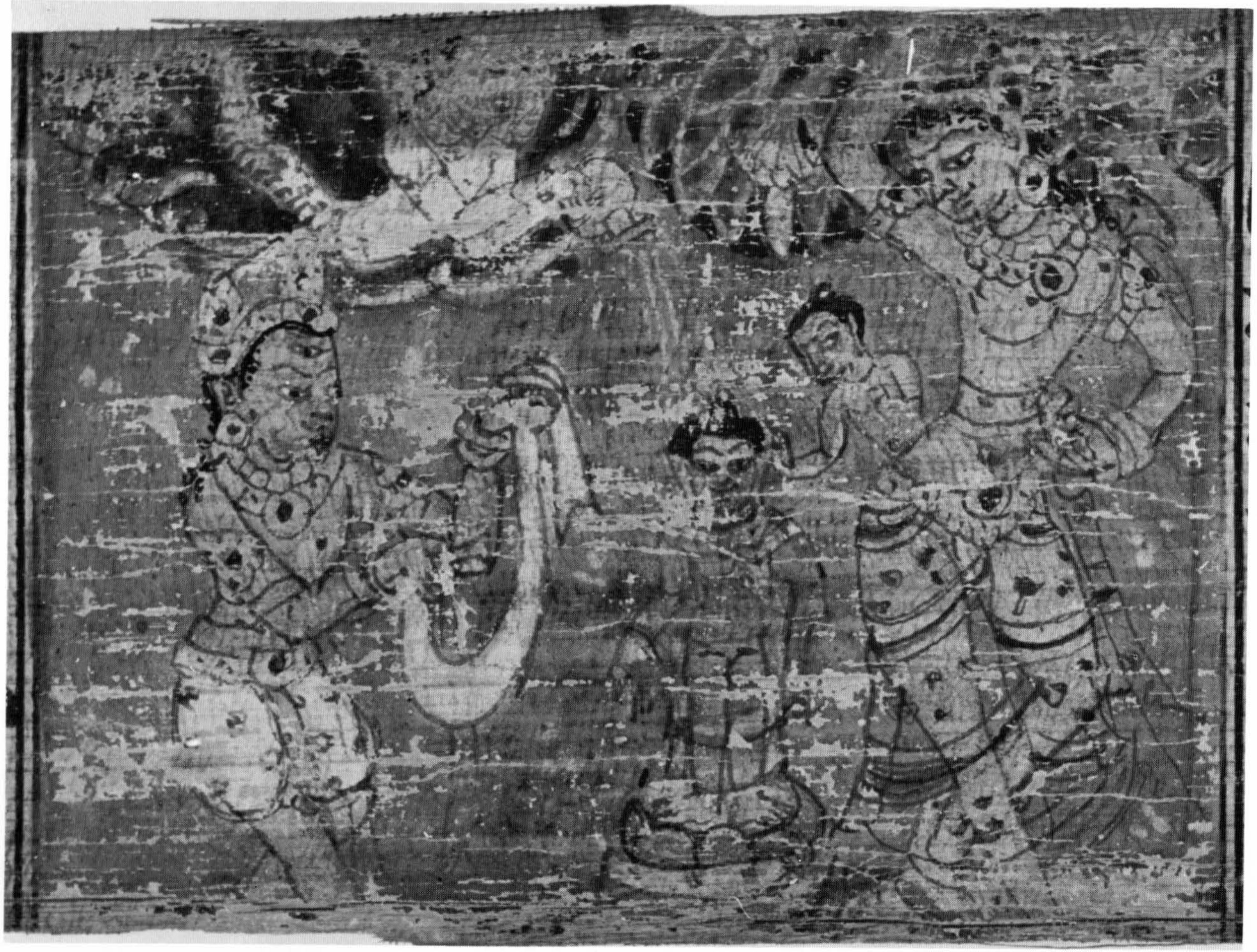
10. Entrance of a House, 19th century, Kathmandu.



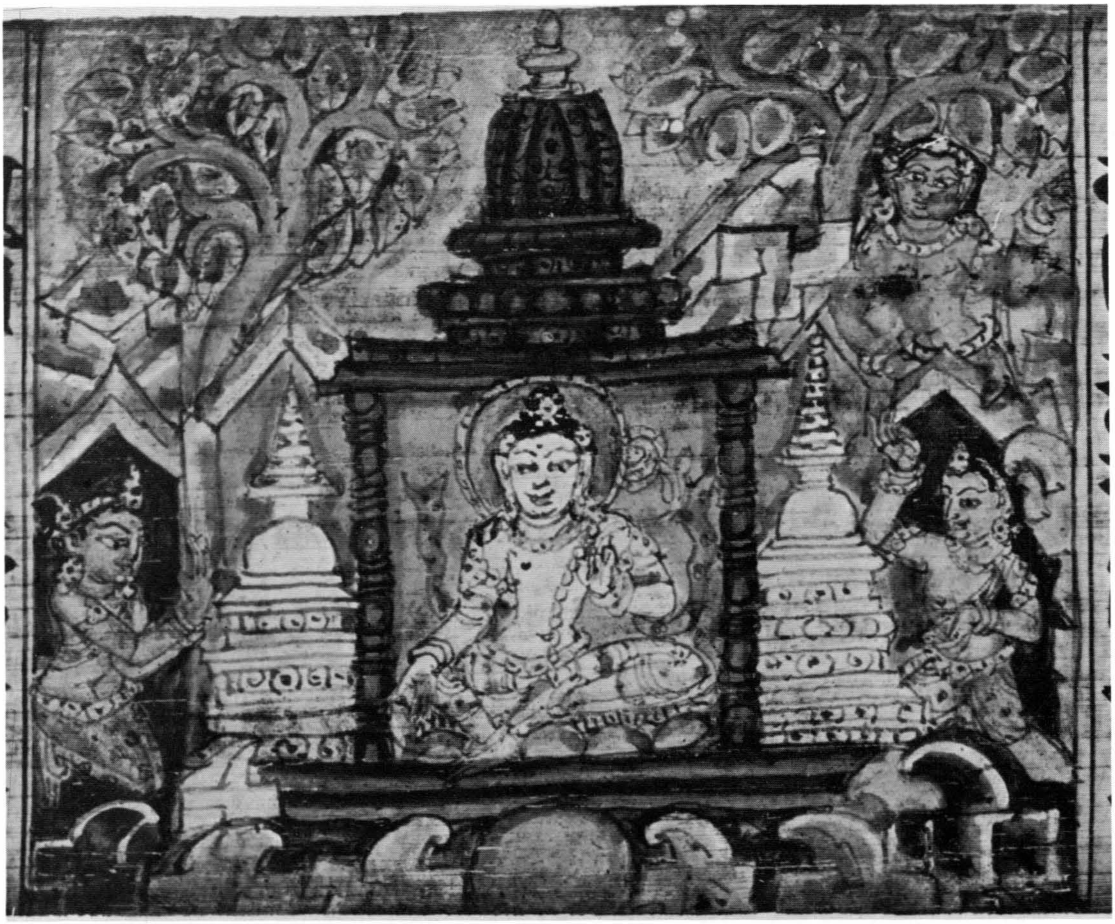
11. Leaves and Covers of a *Prajñāpāramitā* ms., 1117, H. approx. 6.4 cm., W. 56.5 cm. The Cleveland Museum of Art, Purchase from the J. H. Wade Fund.



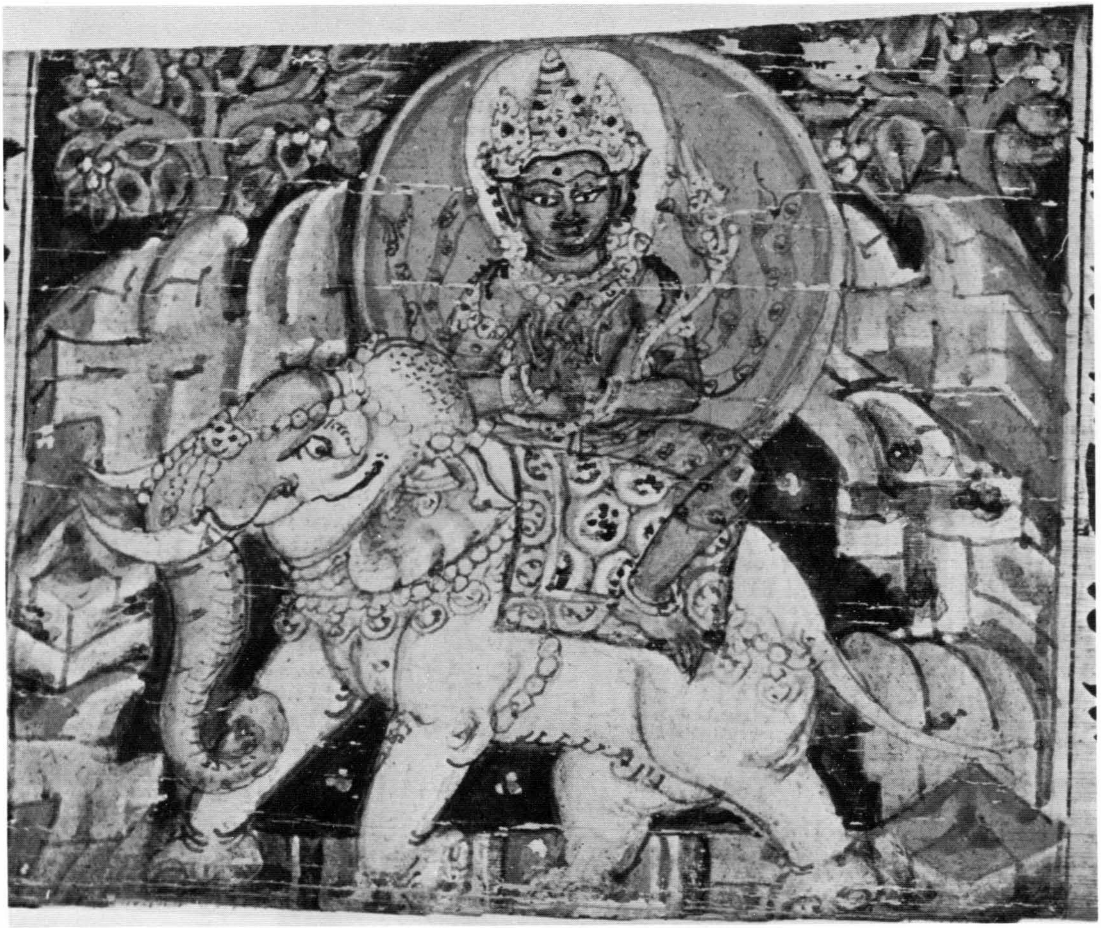
12. *Devīmāhātmya* ms., 1477 (?), H. 4.8 cm., Newark Museum, Purchase 1971 Carrie B. F. Fuld Fund.



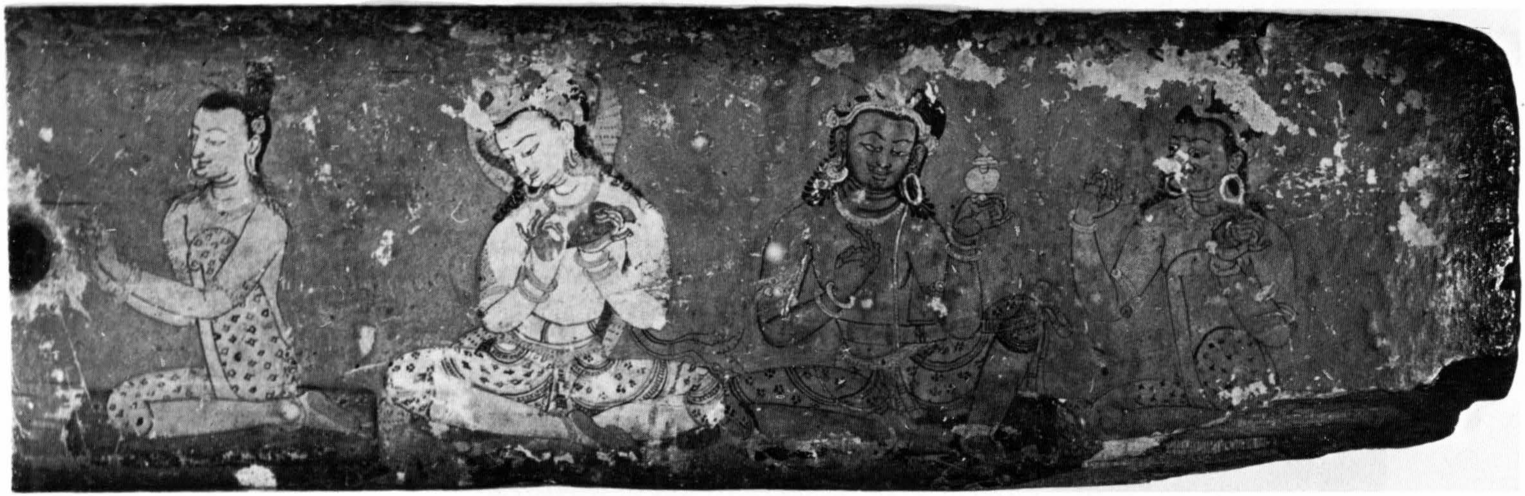
13. The Nativity of the Buddha, *Prajñāpāramitā* ms. 1015. University Library, Cambridge.



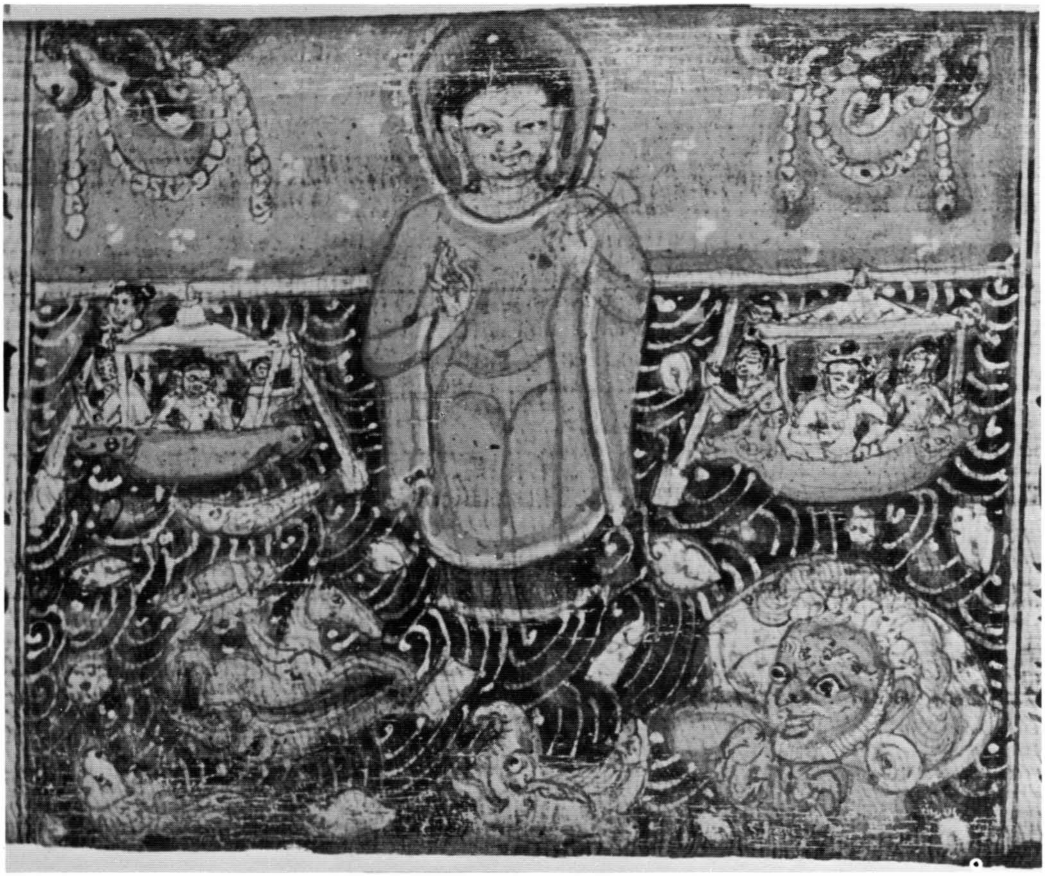
14. Lokanātha, From the same ms. as Fig. 13.



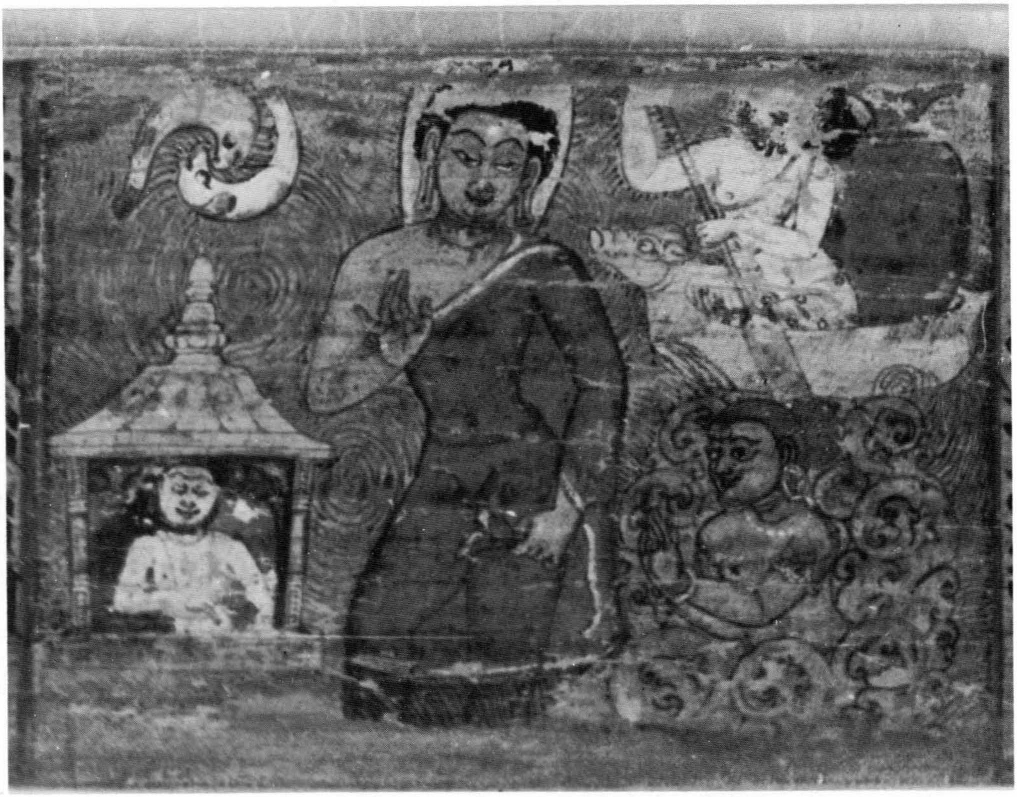
15. Samantabhadra, From the same ms. as Fig. 13.



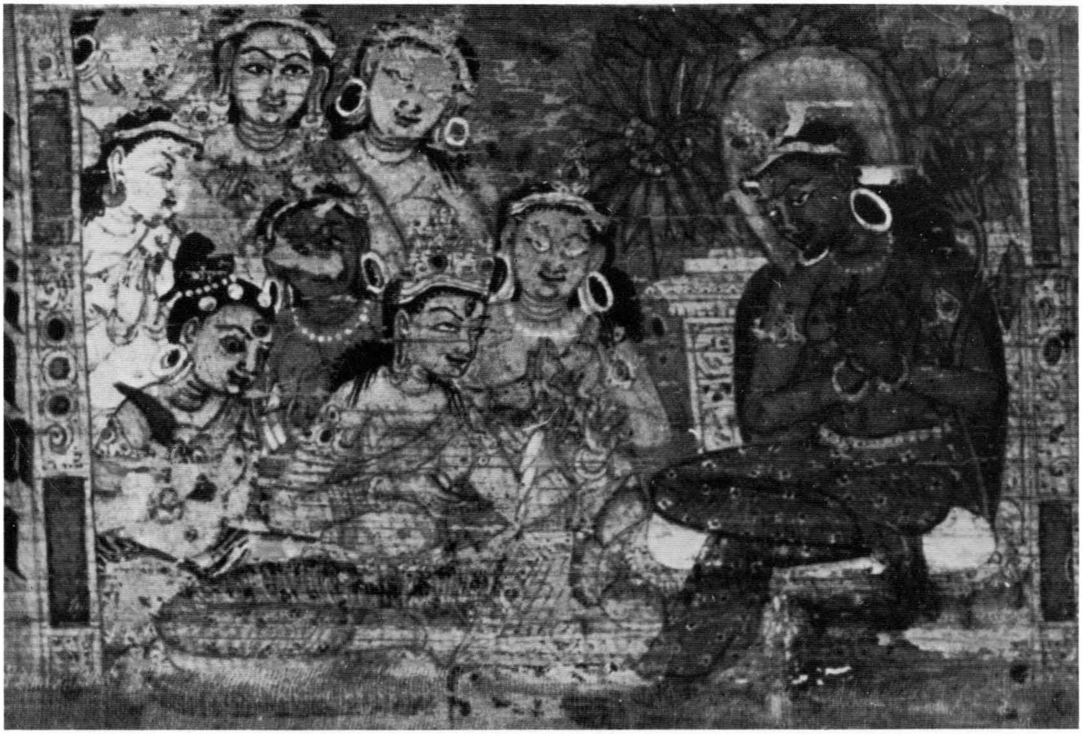
16. Detail from a cover, From the same ms. as Fig. 13.



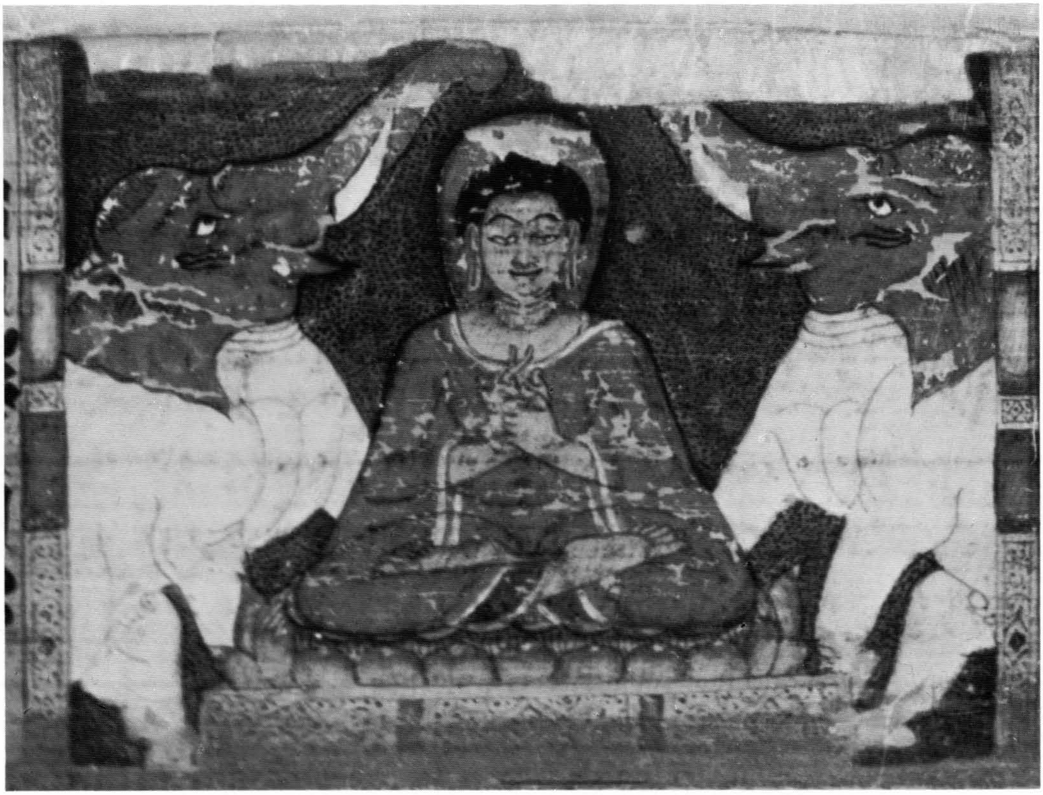
17. Tathāgata Abhayapāṇi, From the same ms. as Fig. 13.



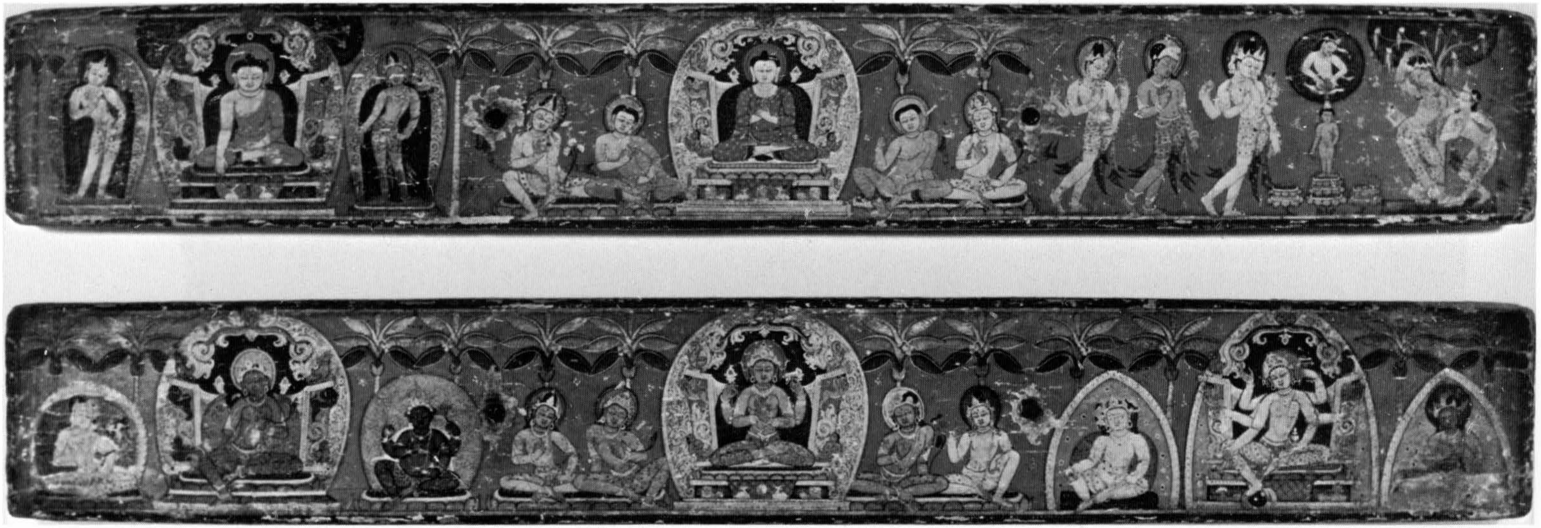
18. Tathāgata Abhayapāṇi, *Prajñāpāramitā* ms., 1071. The Asiatic Society, Calcutta.



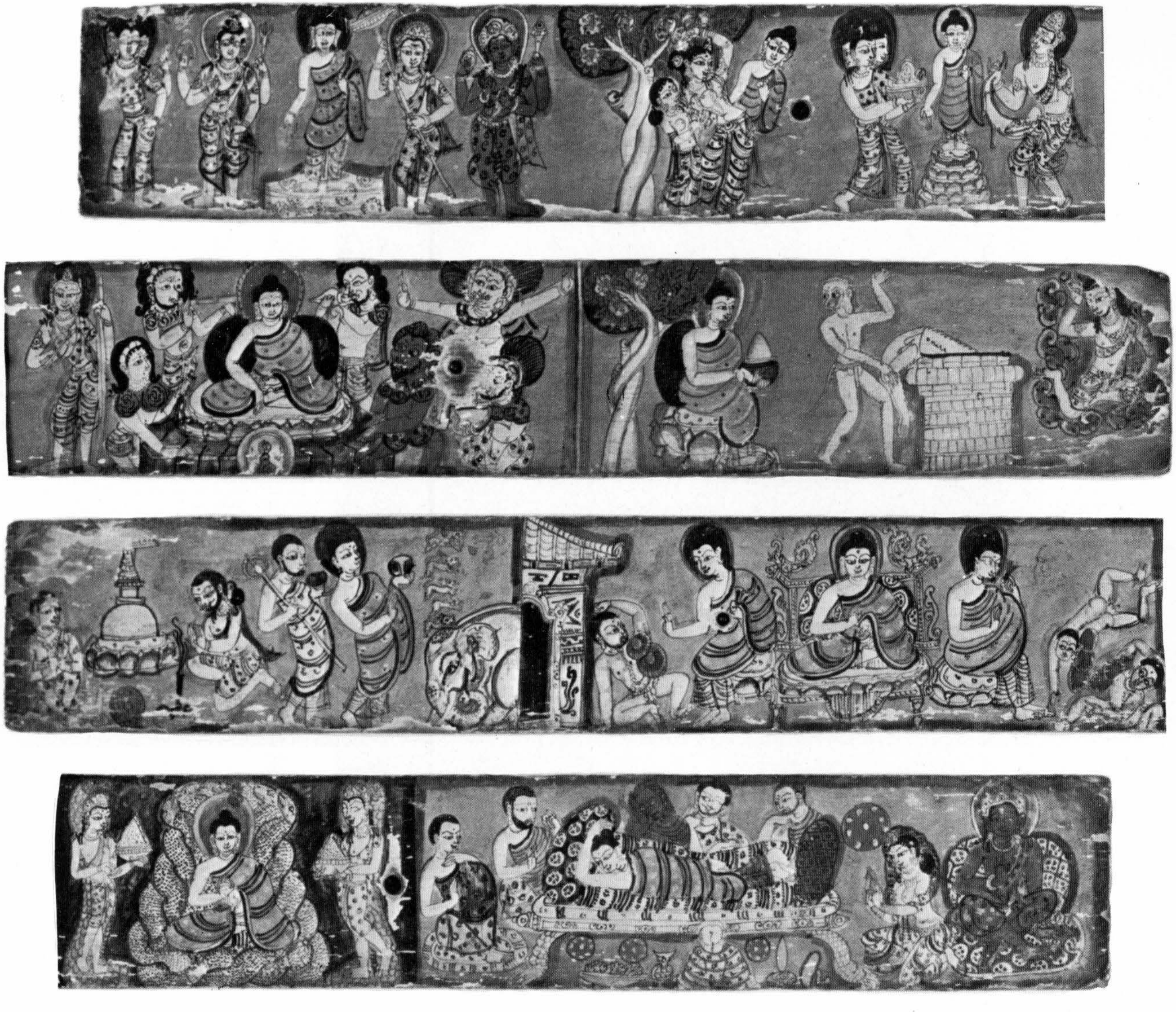
19. Goddess Mahāśrī Tārā preaching, From the same ms. as Fig. 18.



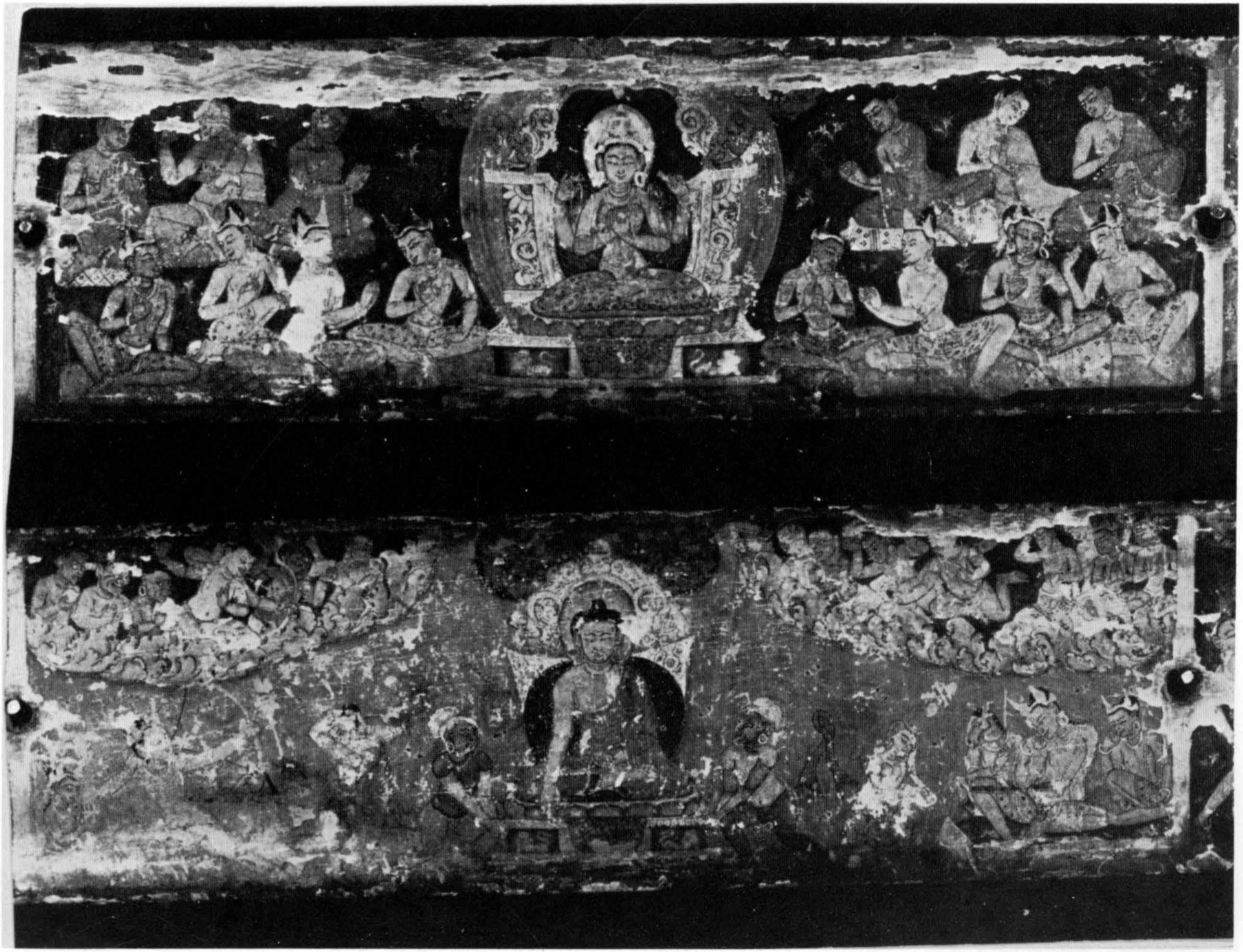
20. Lustration of the Buddha, From the same ms. as Fig. 18.



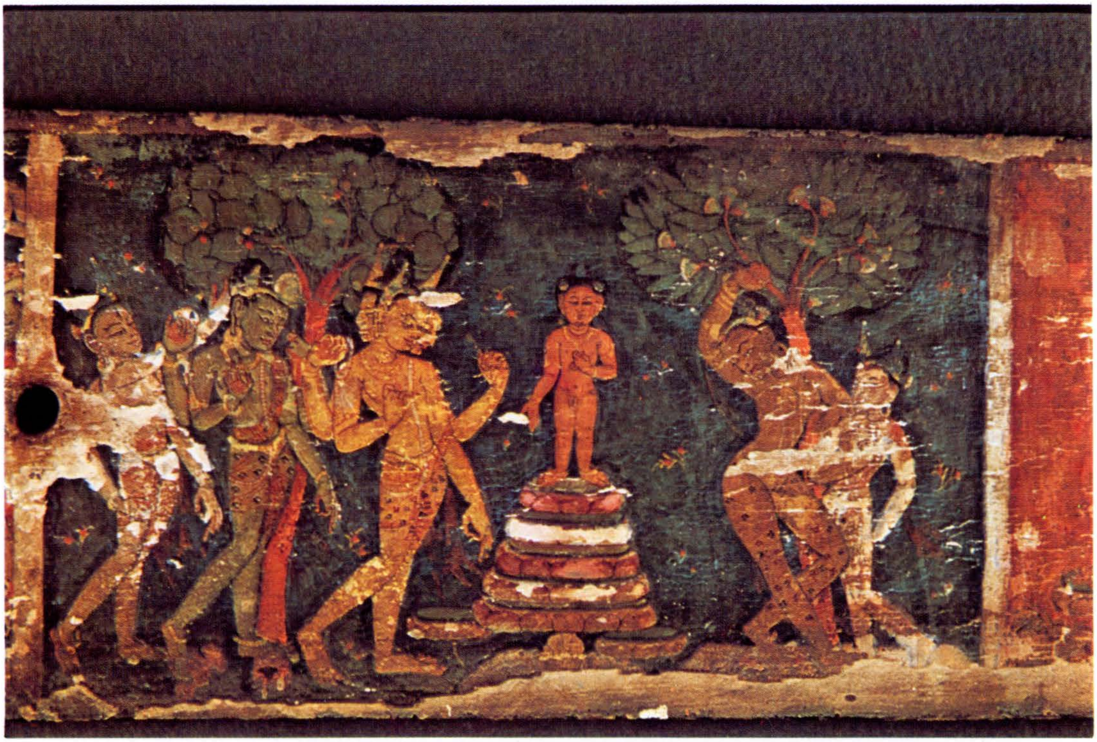
21. Covers of a *Prajñāpāramitā* ms., 1028, H. 4.6 cm., W. 44.5 cm. Neotia Collection, Calcutta.



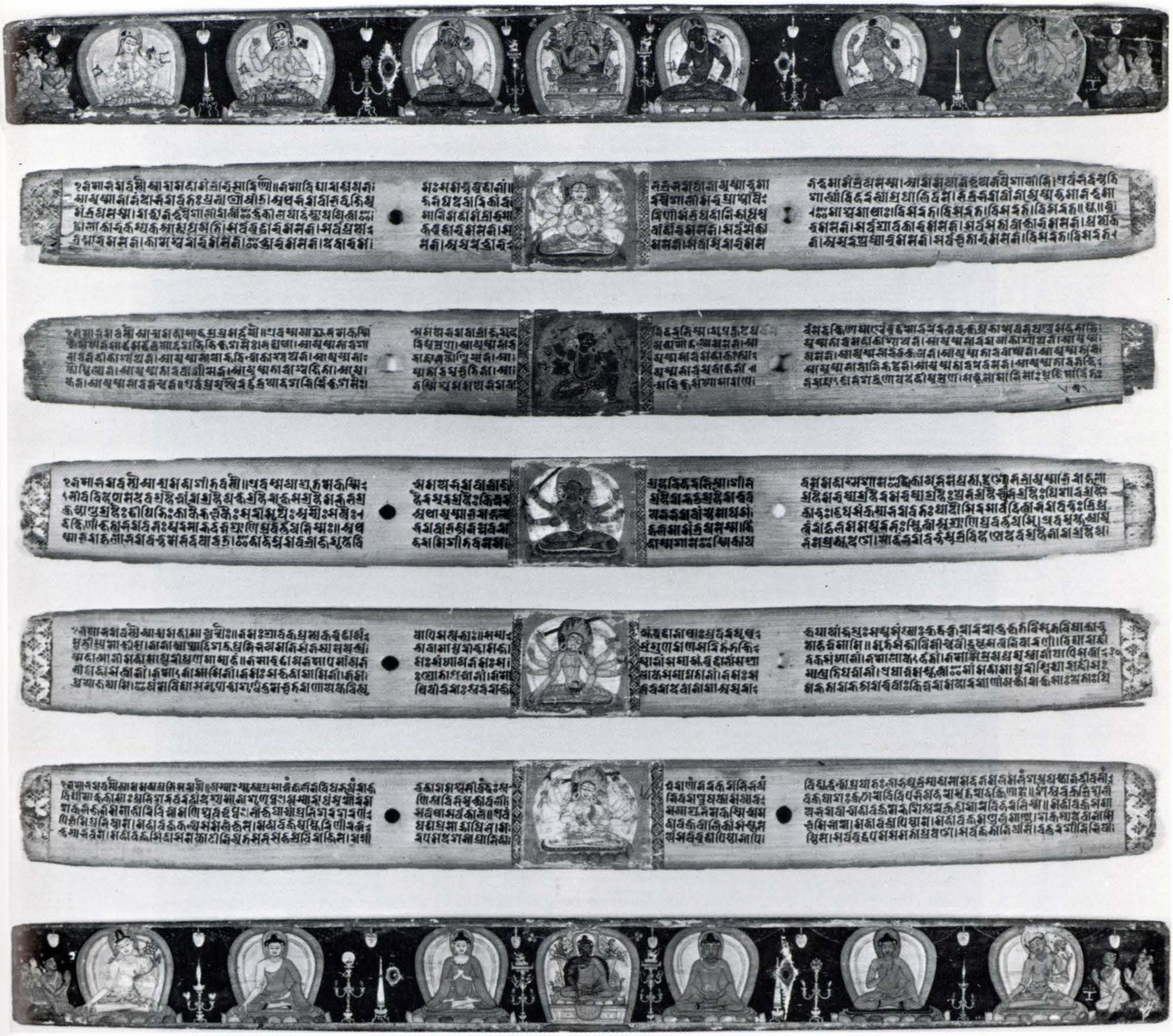
22. Covers showing scenes from the Buddha's Life, *Prajñāpāramitā* ms., 1054, H. 5.4 cm., W. 55.8 cm. From the Nasli and Alice Heeramaneck Collection, Los Angeles County Museum of Art.



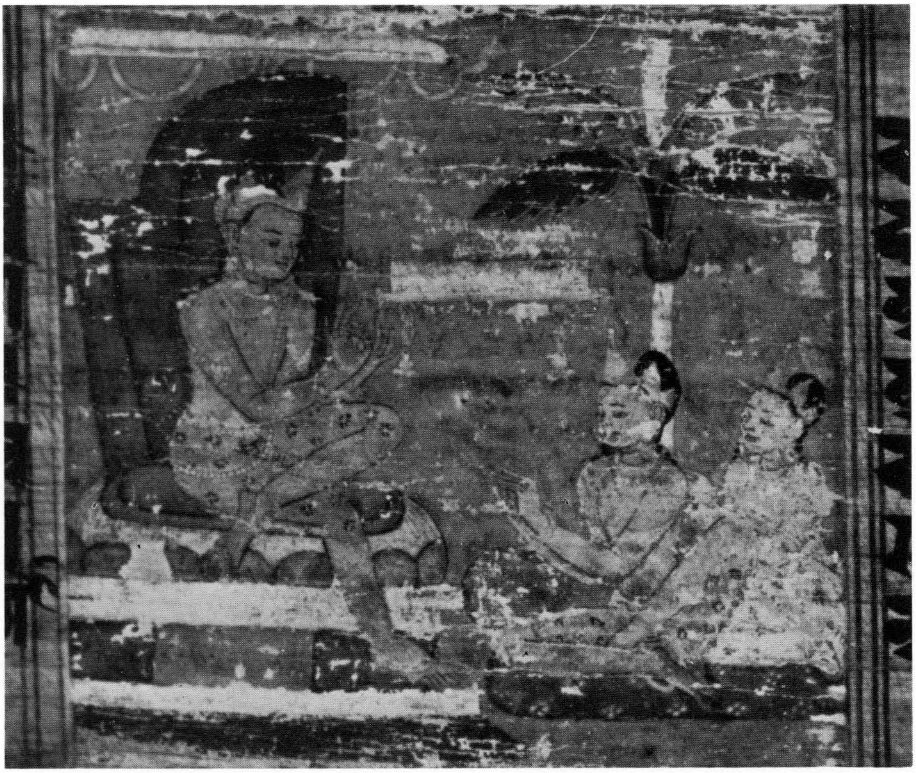
23. Temptation of the Buddha and Prajñāpāramitā preaching, sections from *Prajñāpāramitā* ms. covers, ca. 1100, Mr. and Mrs. H. K. Swali, Bombay.



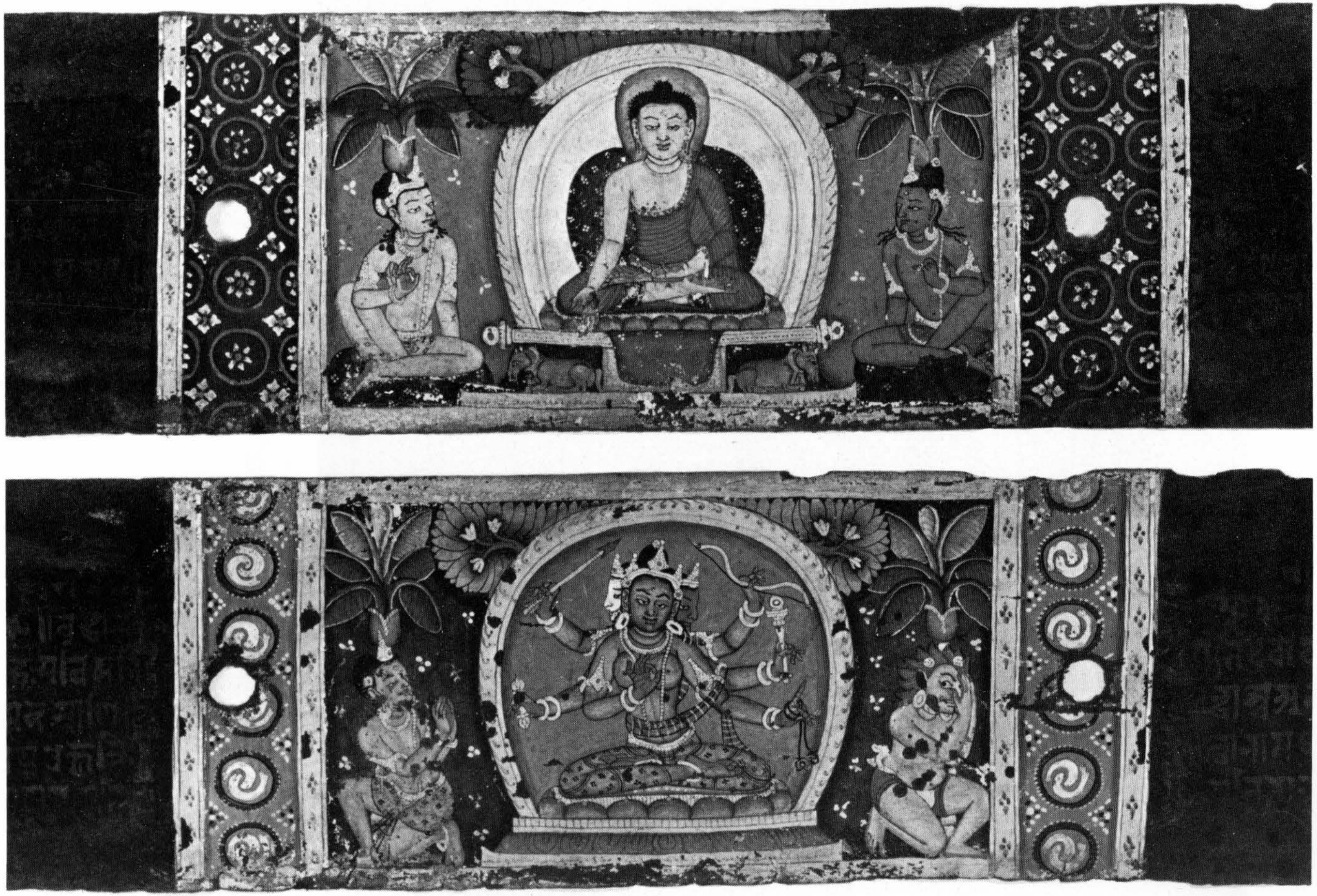
24. The Nativity of the Buddha, From the same covers as Fig. 23.



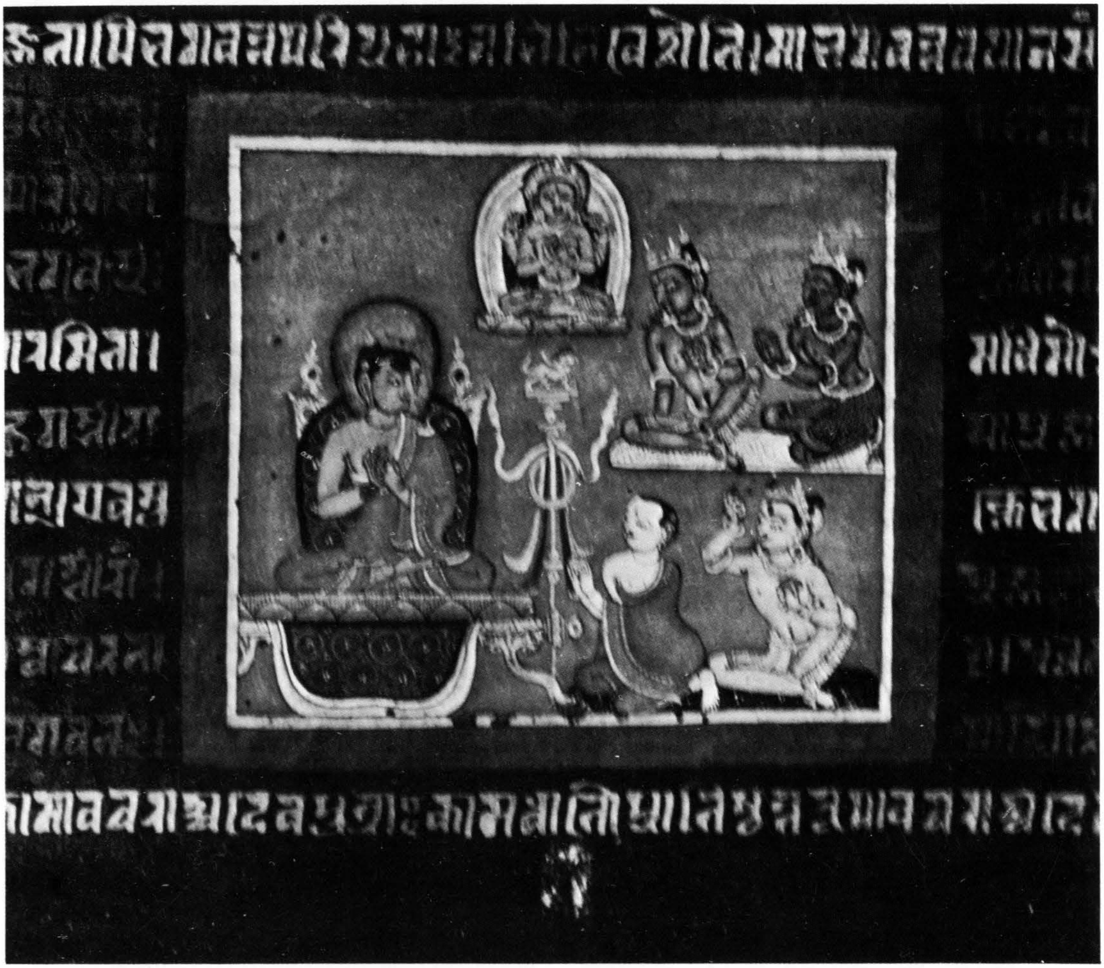
25. *Prajñāpāramitā* ms. covers and five leaves from a *Pañcarakṣā* ms. 1138, covers H. 6.4 cm., W. 57.2 cm., Leaves H. 5.7 cm., W. 55.3 cm. Edwin Binney 3rd Collection, San Diego.



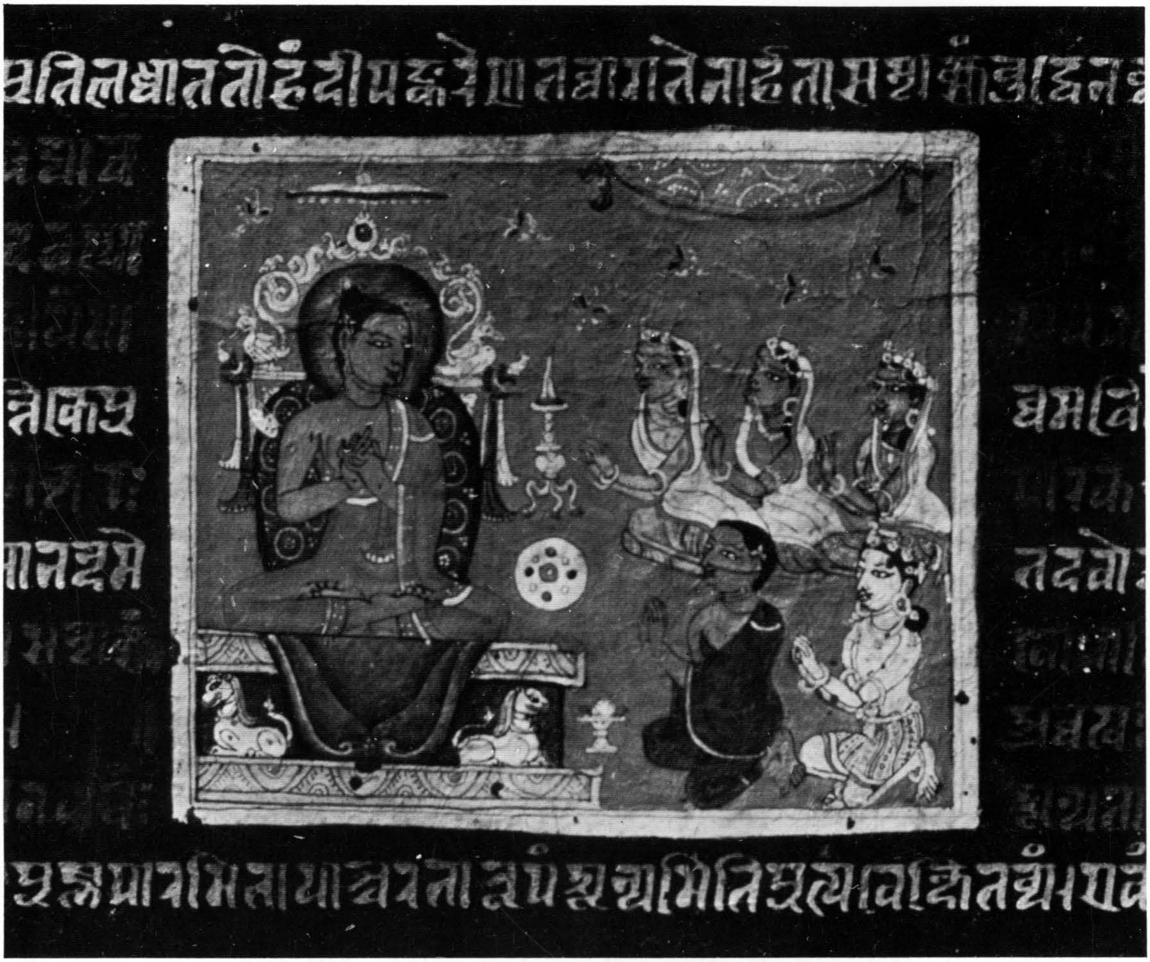
26. Bodhisattva Preaching, *Prajñāpāramitā* ms., 1148. University Library, Cambridge.



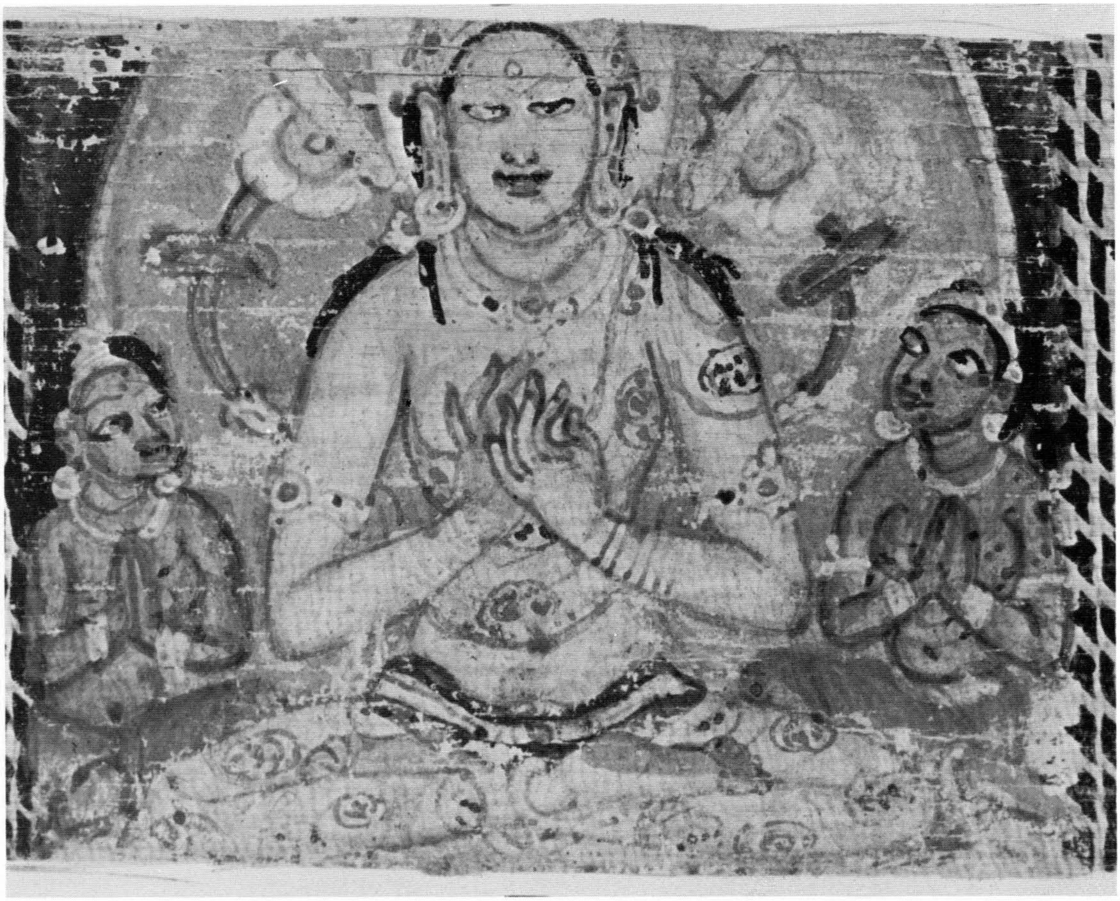
27. Two Illuminations from a *Pañcarakṣā* ms., ca. 1250. Paper, H. 7.3 cm., W. 36.5 cm. From the Nasli and Alice Heeramaneck Collection, Los Angeles County Museum of Art.



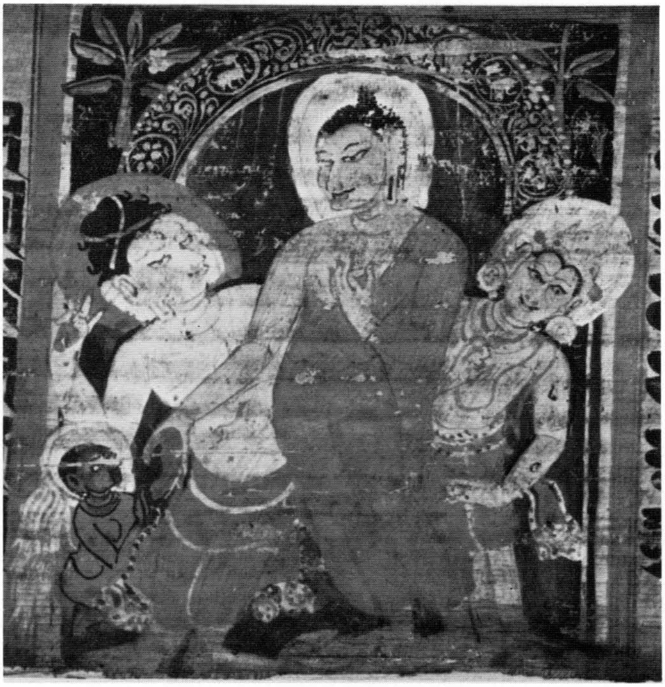
28. Buddha Preaching, *Prajñāpāramitā* ms., 1367, Paper. Indian Museum, Calcutta.



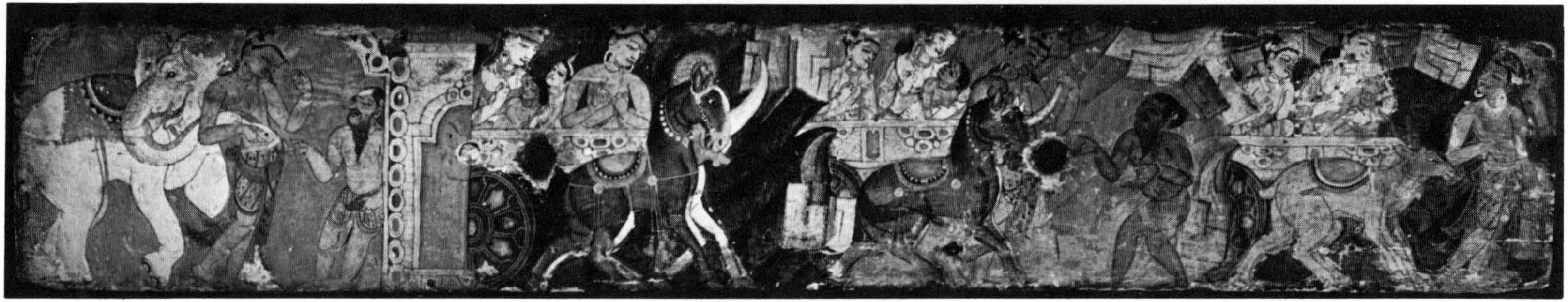
29. Buddha Preaching, From the same ms. as Fig. 28.



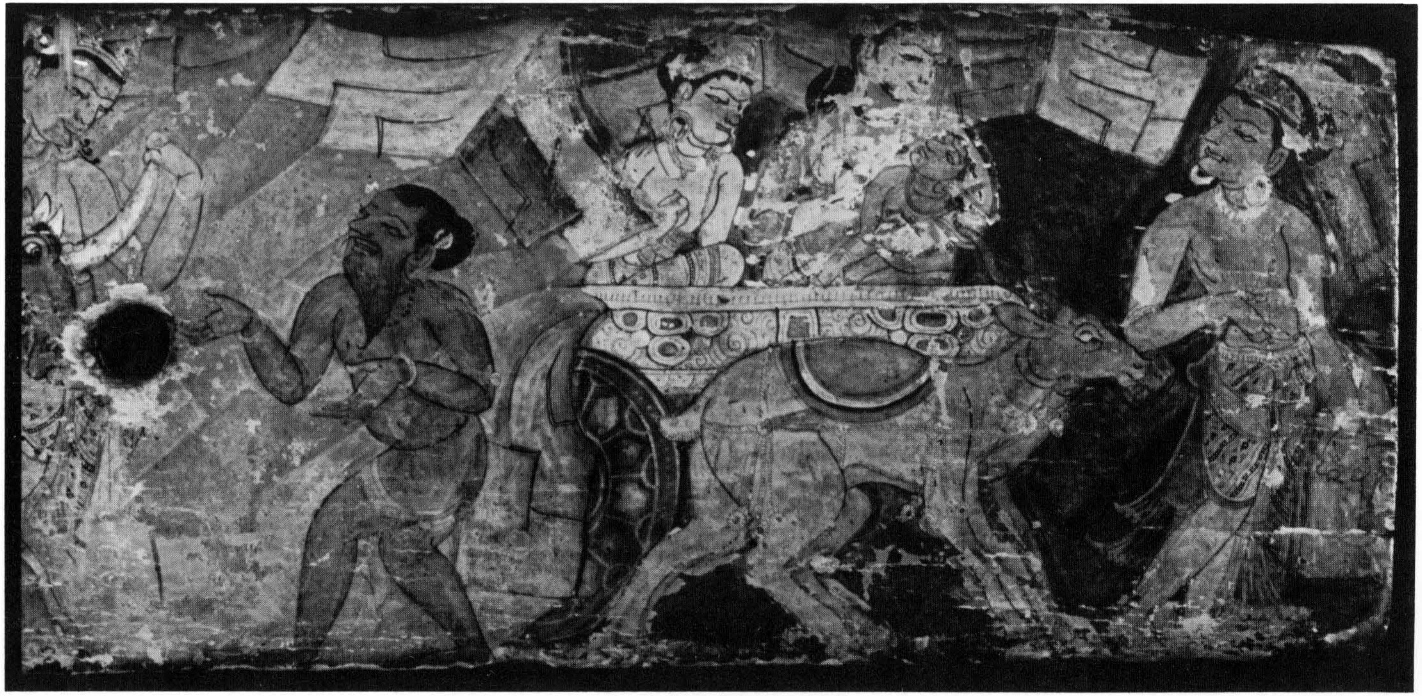
30. Goddess Prajñāpāramitā, *Prajñāpāramitā* ms., Eastern India, 12th century, H. 4.8 cm., W. 51.5 cm. From the Nasli and Alice Heeramaneck Collection, Los Angeles County Museum of Art.



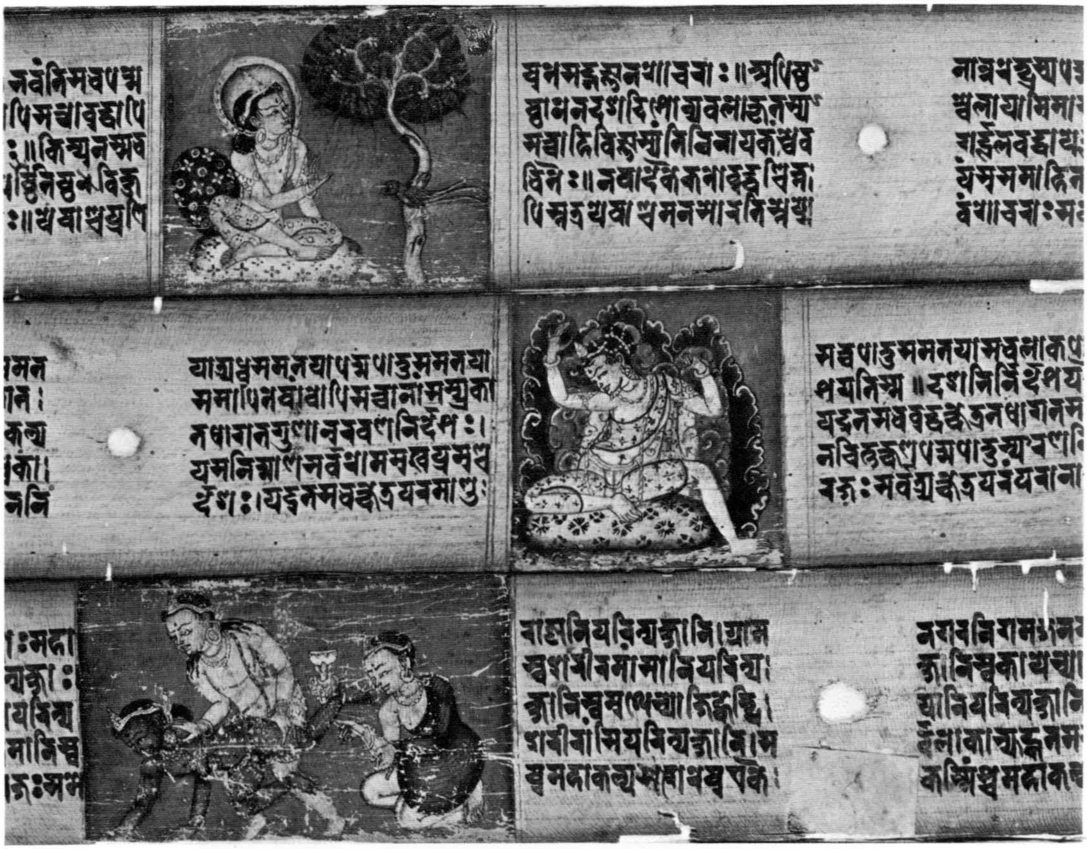
31. Descent of the Buddha from the Heavens, *Prajñāpāramitā* ms., Eastern India, 12th century, H. 7 cm. Freer Gallery of Art, Washington, D.C.



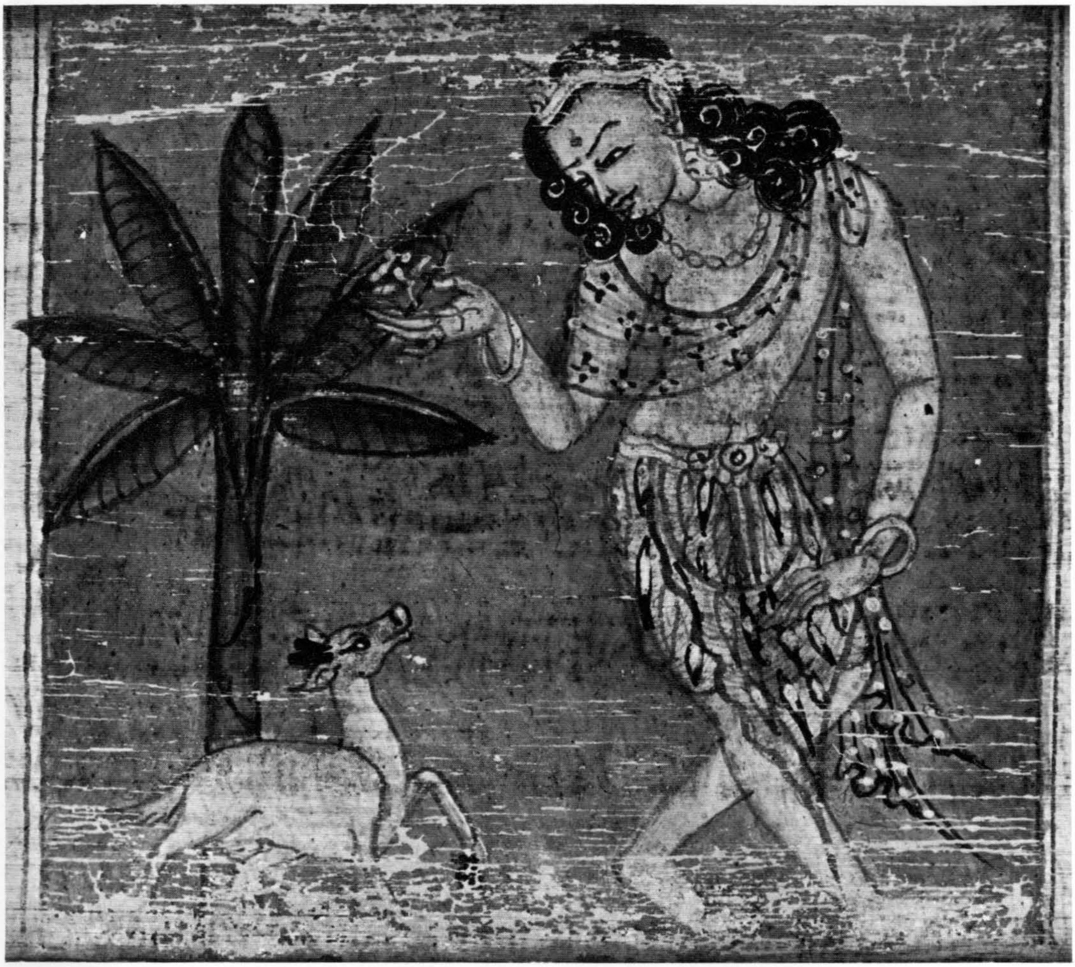
32. Vessantara Jāṭaka, ms. cover, 12th century, H. 6 cm., W. 33 cm. The National Museum, New Delhi.



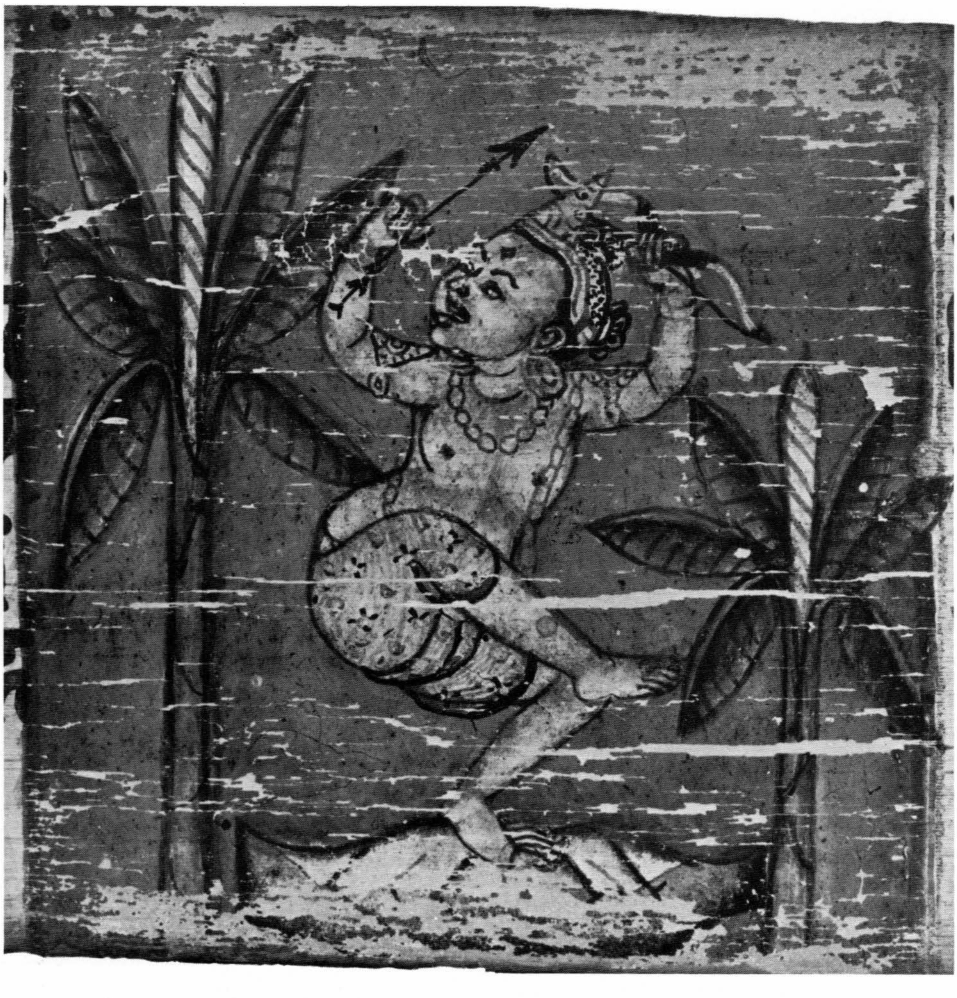
33. Detail of Fig. 32.



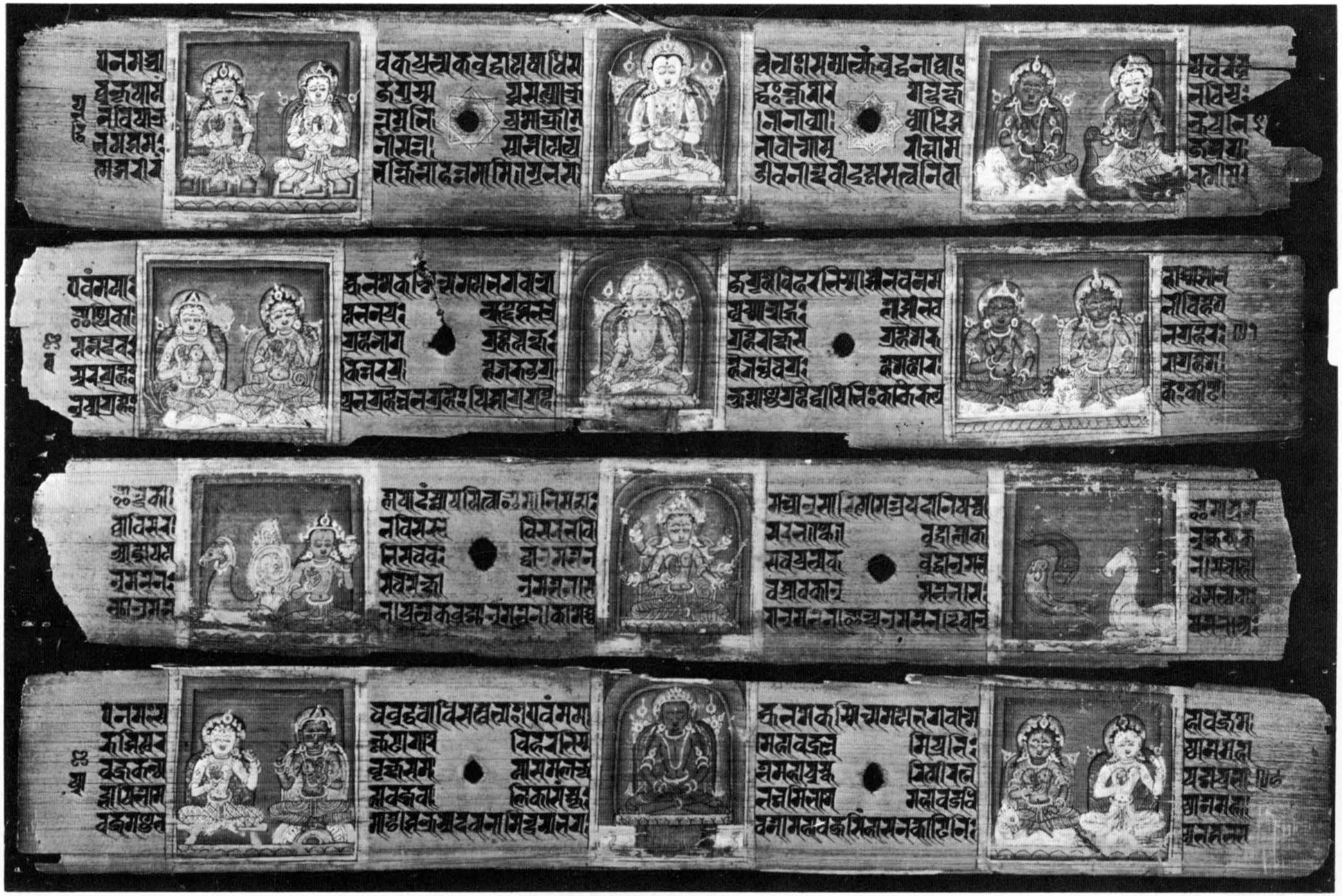
34. Leaves from a *Gaṇḍavyūha* ms., 12th century, Each page H. 5.1 cm. The Cleveland Museum of Art, Purchase from the J. H. Wade Fund.



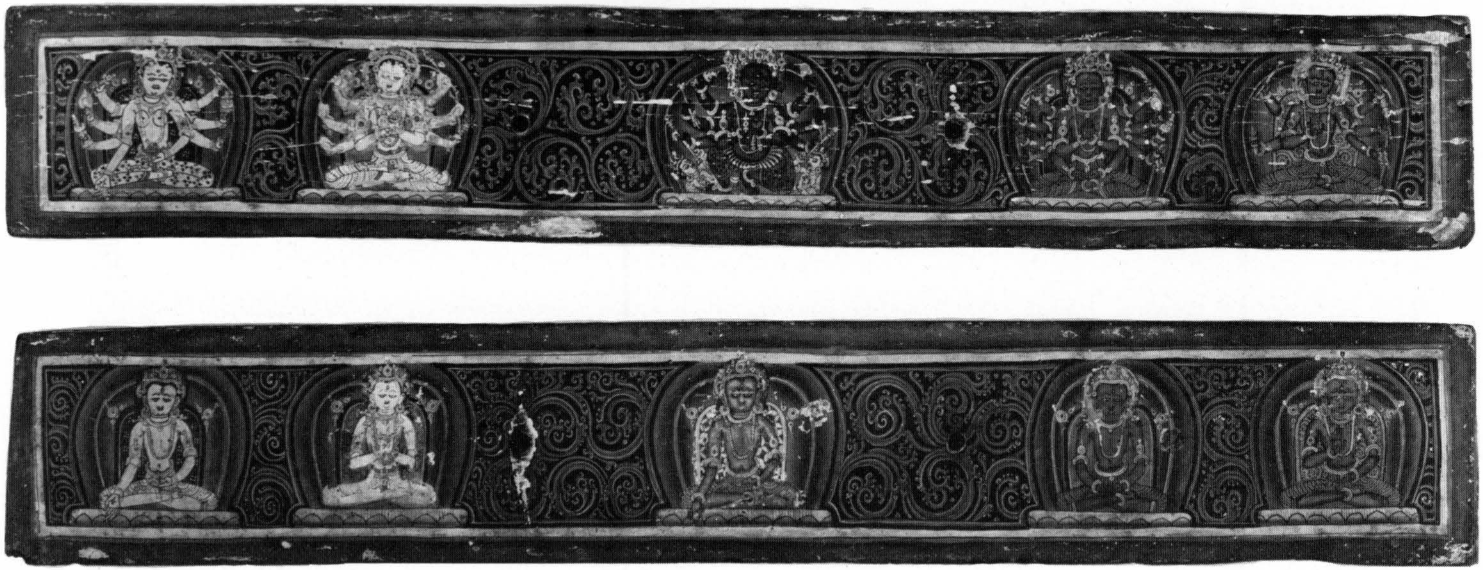
35. A Bodhisattva and a deer, from the same ms. as Fig. 34. From the Nasli and Alice Heeramaneck Collection, Los Angeles County Museum of Art.



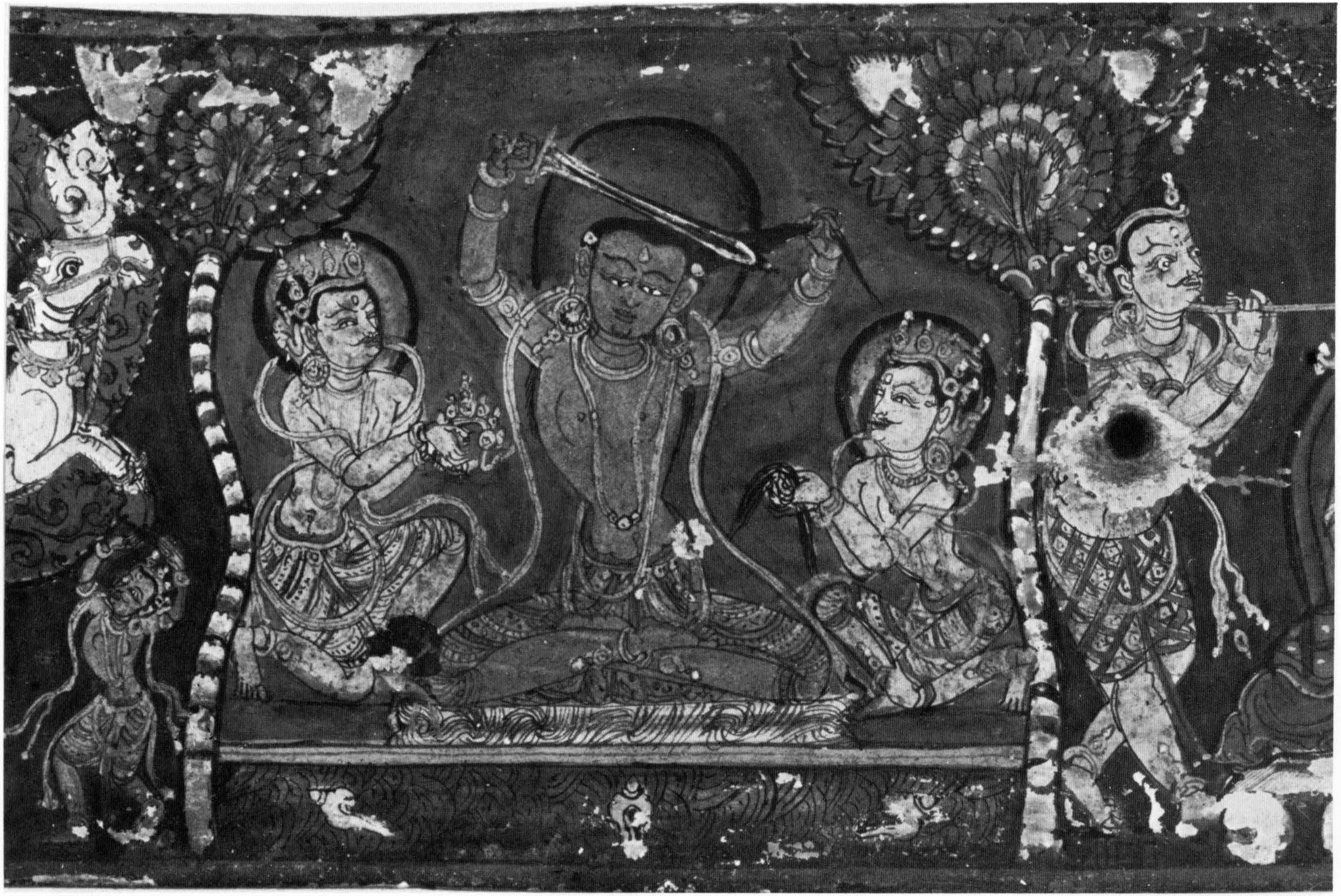
36. Dancing Kāma, from the same ms. as Fig. 34. From the Nasli and Alice Heeramaneck Collection, Los Angeles County Museum of Art.



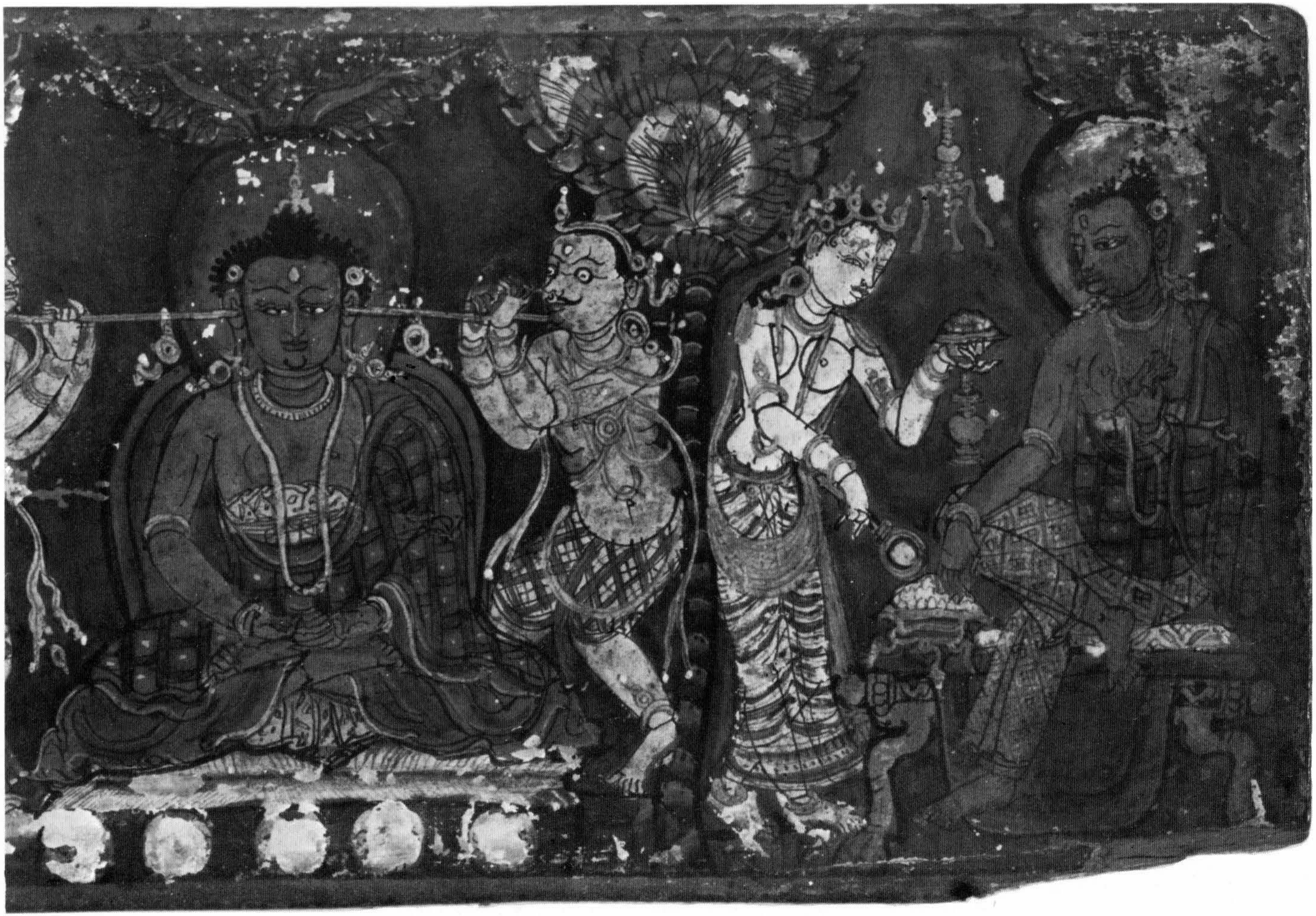
37. Leaves from a *Dhāraṇīsaṁgraha* ms., 15th century, H. 11.6 cm., W. 27 cm. The Metropolitan Museum, Rogers Fund.



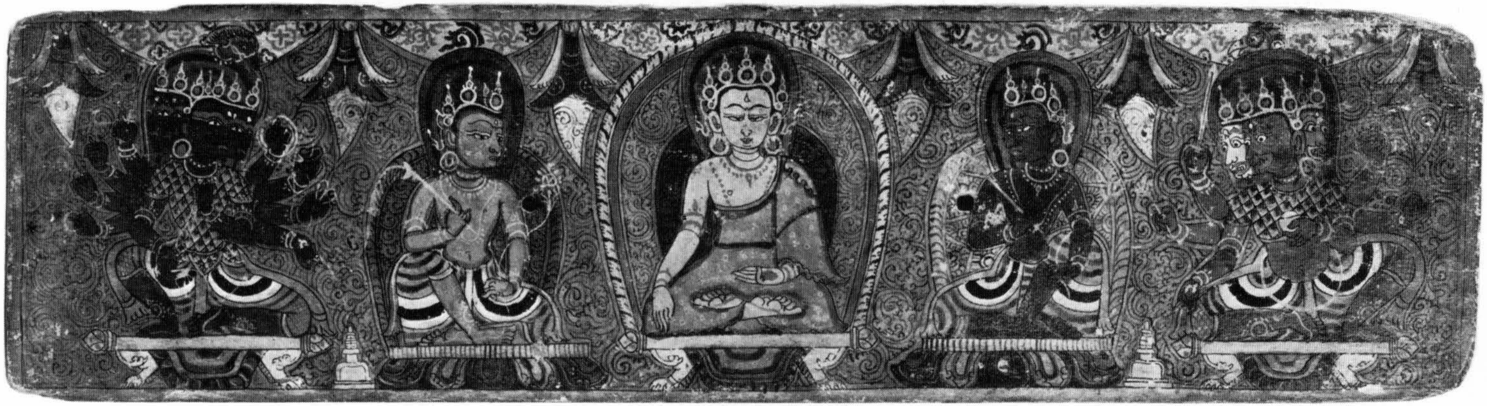
38. Covers of a *Pañcarakṣā* ms., 15th century, H. 5.7 cm., W. 34.8 cm. Doris Wiener Gallery, New York.



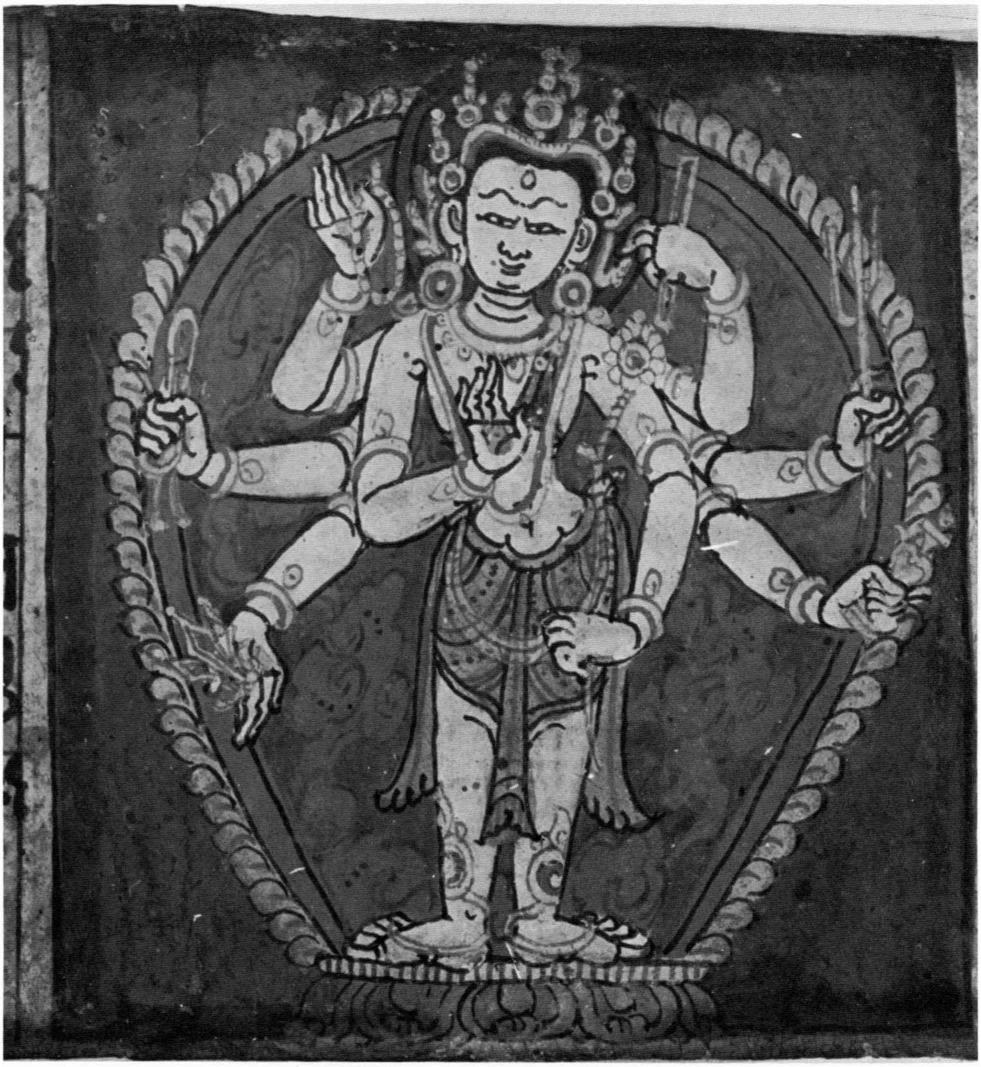
39. Gautama cutting his hair, Cover of a *Prajñāpāramitā* ms. 1511, The Royal Library, Copenhagen.



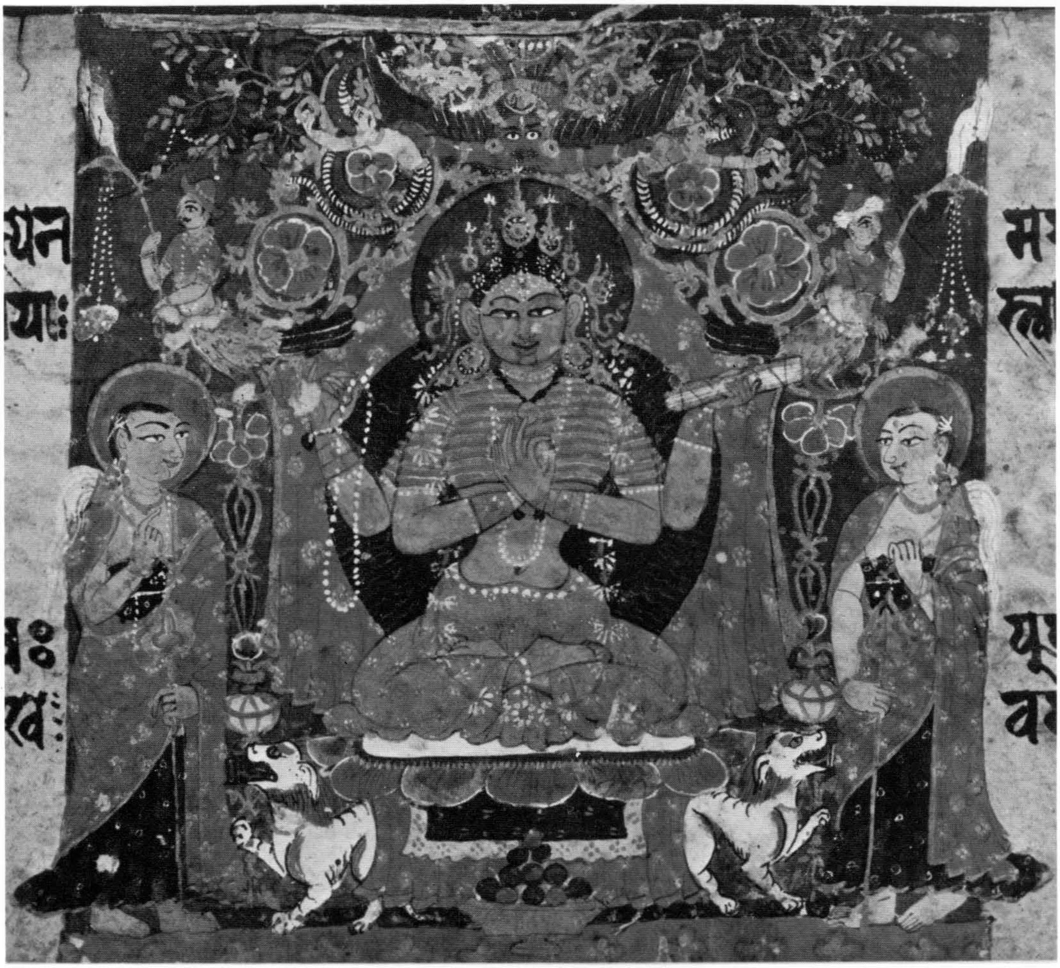
40. Māra's attack and Sujātā offering rice to Śākyamuni, From the same cover as Fig. 39.



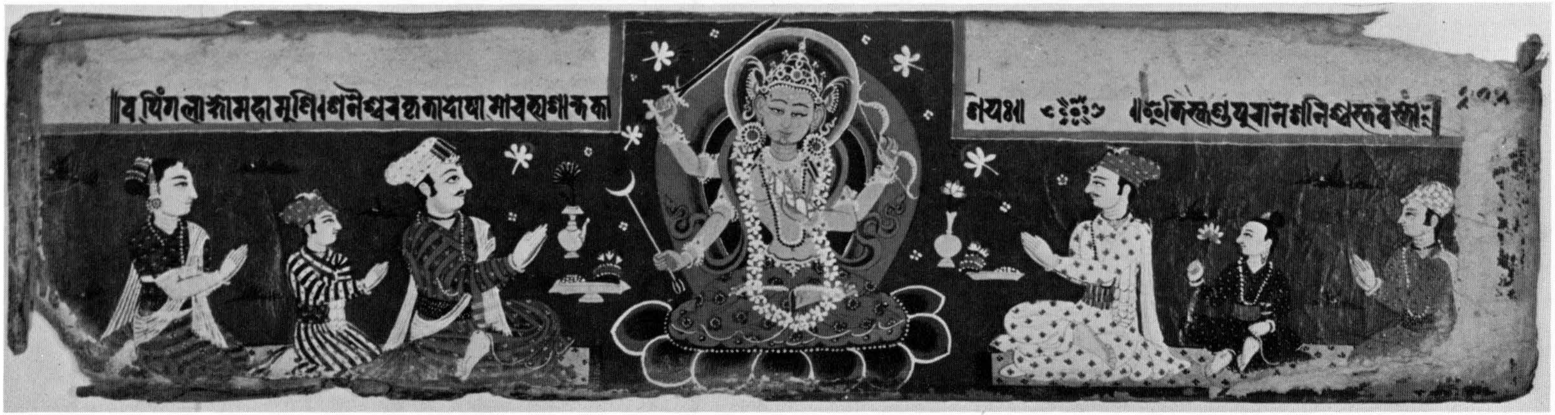
41. Buddha with attendants, ms. cover, ca. 1575, H. 12.3 cm., W. 45.7 cm. Doris Wiener Gallery.



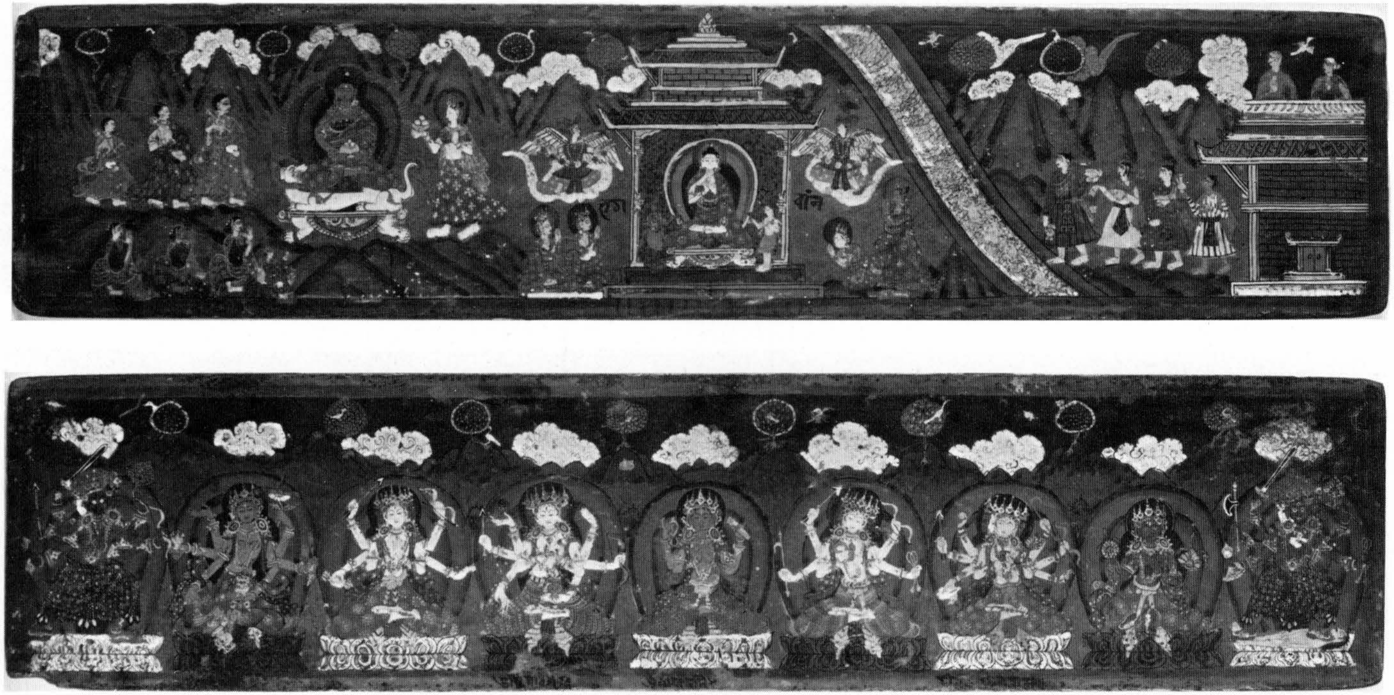
42. Amoghapāśa Lokeśvara, *Kāraṇḍavyūha* ms., 1641, University Library, Cambridge.



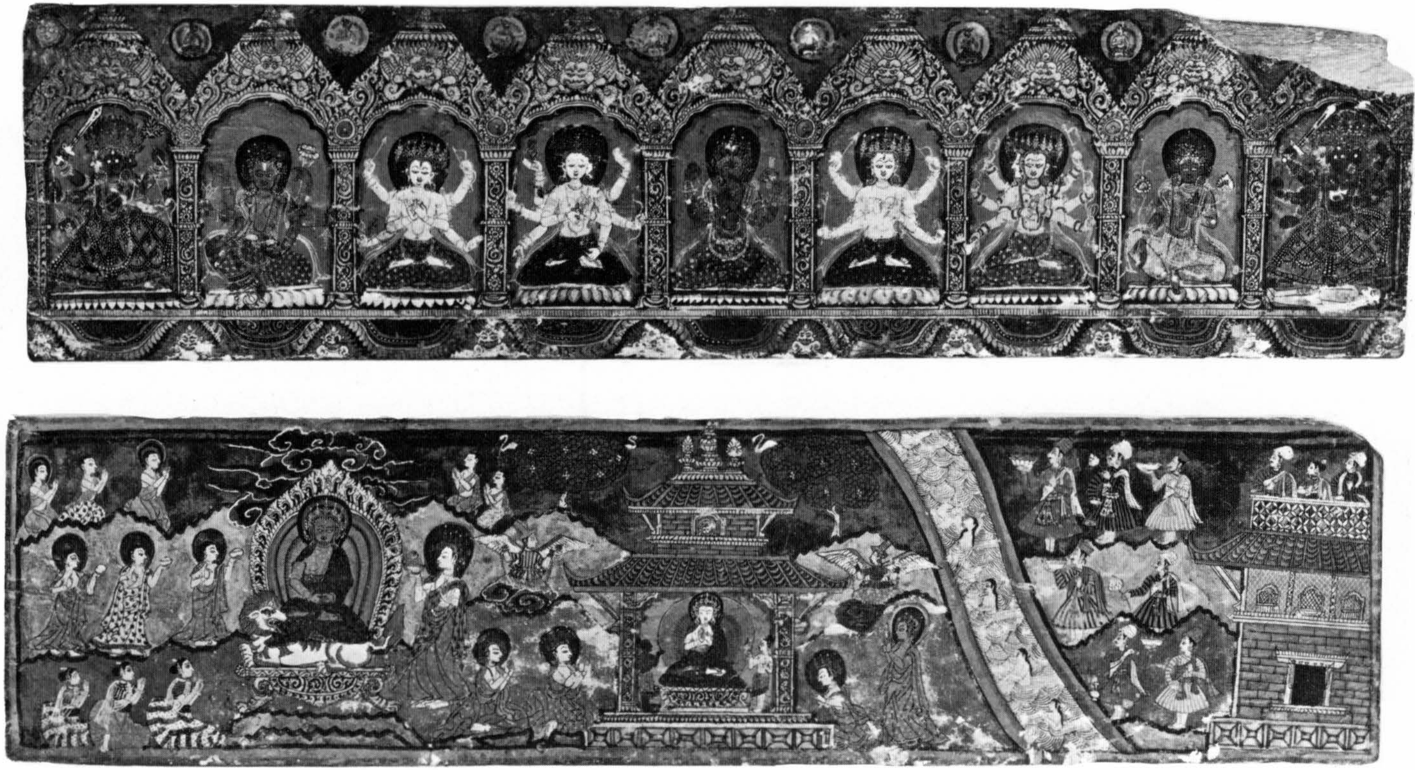
43. Goddess Prajñāpāramitā, *Prajñāpāramitā* ms., 1682, Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, John Gardner Coolidge Collection.



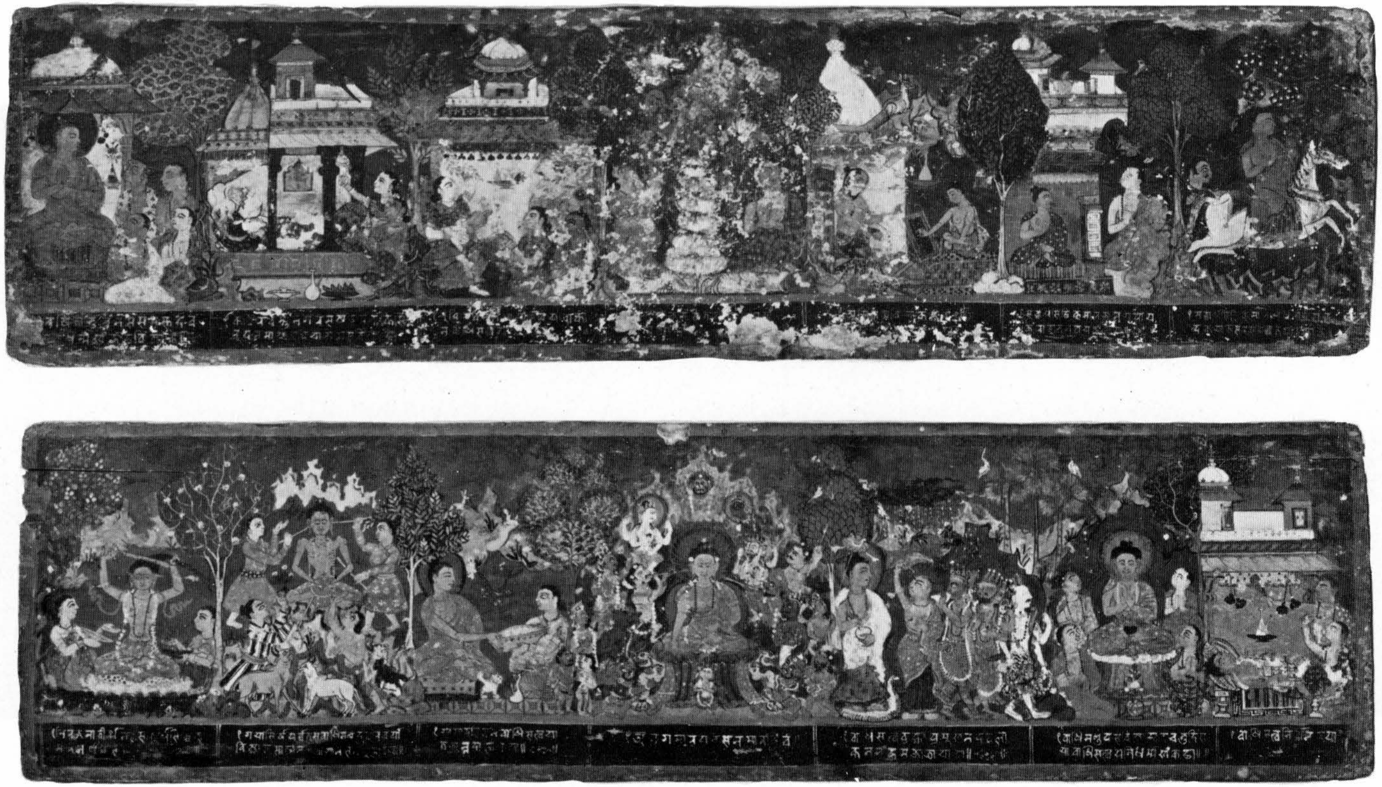
44. Worship of Mañjuśrī, *Dhāraṇīsaṁgraha* ms., 1719, University Library, Cambridge.



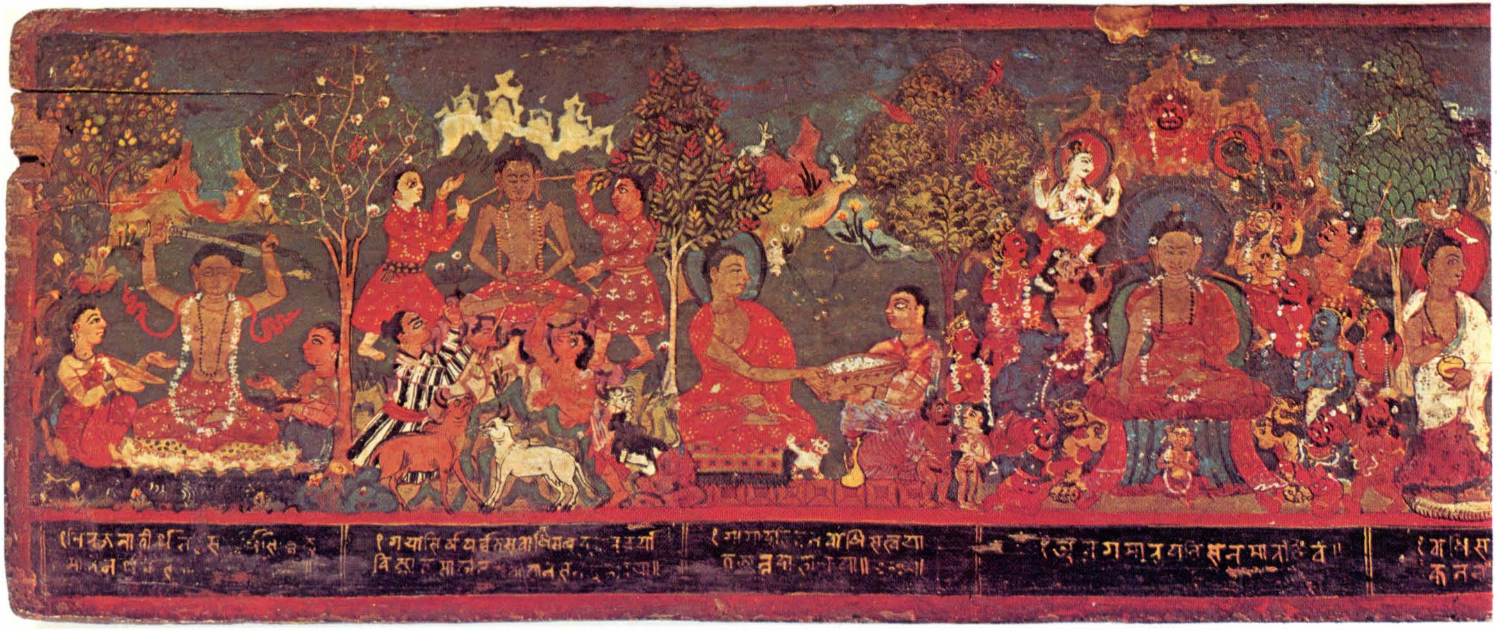
45. Covers of a *Pañcarakṣā* ms., 18th century, H. 11.5 cm., W. 50.8 cm. George P. Bickford Collection, Cleveland.



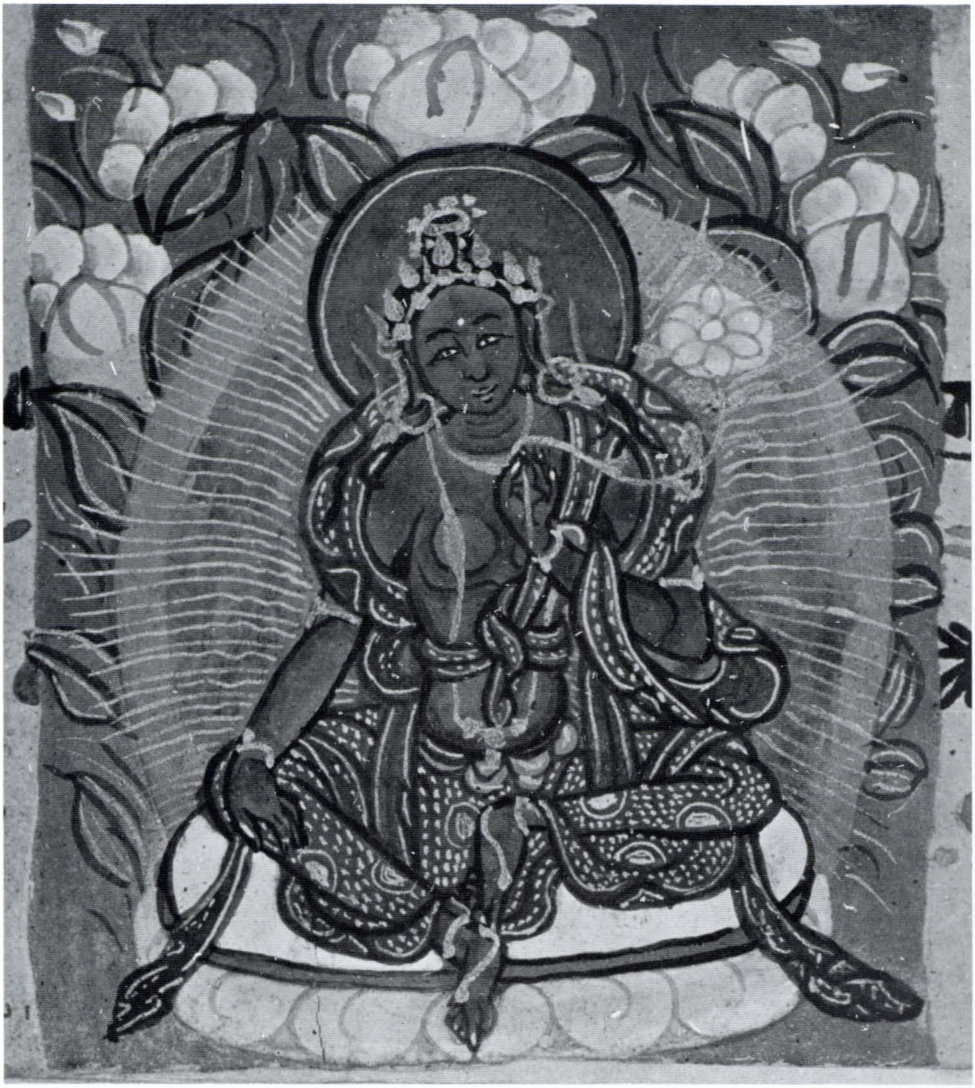
46. Covers of a *Pañcarakṣā* ms., 18th century, H. 14 cm., W. 55.3 cm. Doris Wiener Gallery.



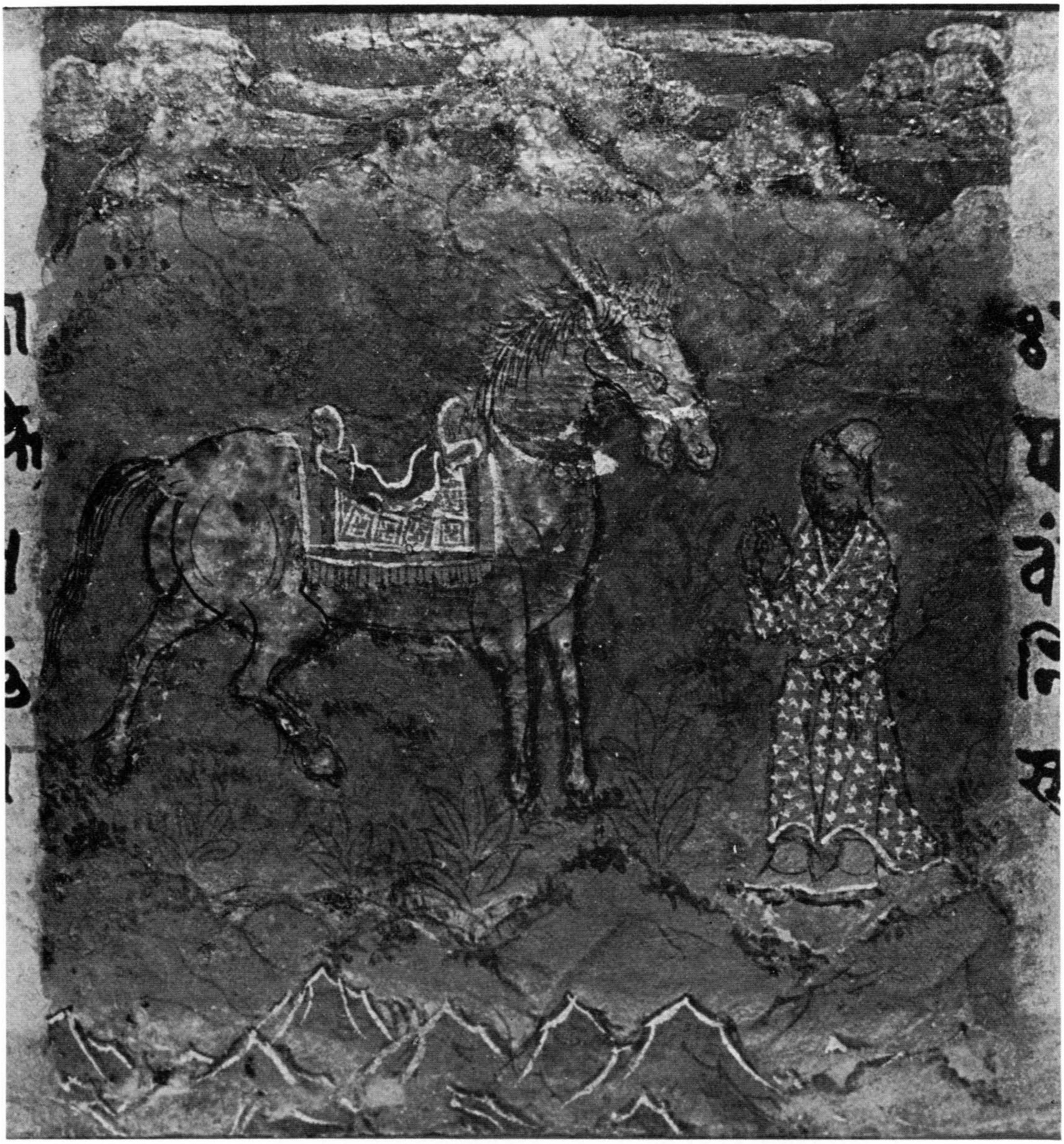
47. Scenes from the Buddha's Life, Covers of a Buddhist manuscript, 18th century, H. 10.2 cm., W. 36.2 cm. Edwin Binney 3rd Collection.



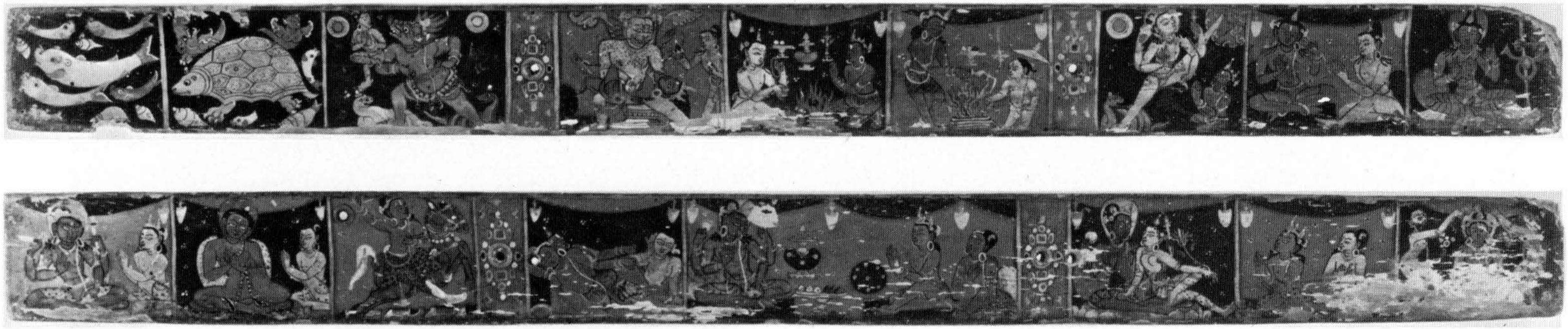
48. Scenes from the Buddha's Life, detail of Fig. 47.



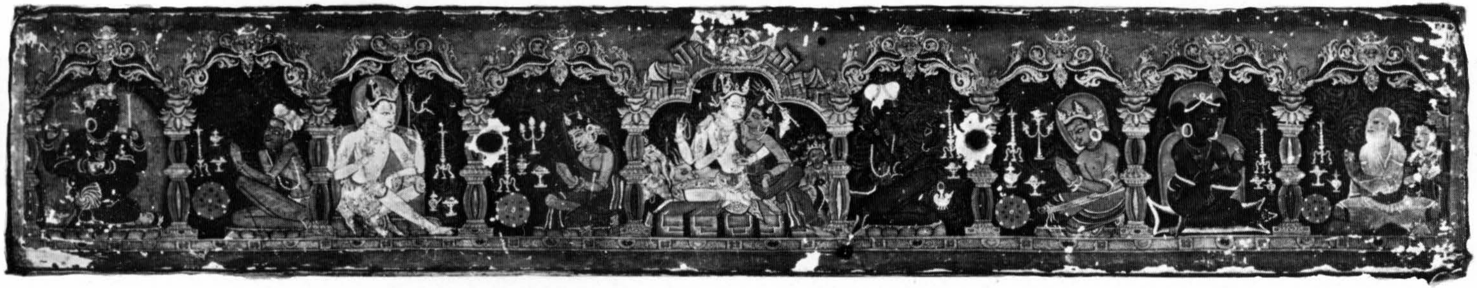
49. Goddess Tārā, From a *Dhāraṇīsaṁgraha* ms., 19th century, University Library, Cambridge.



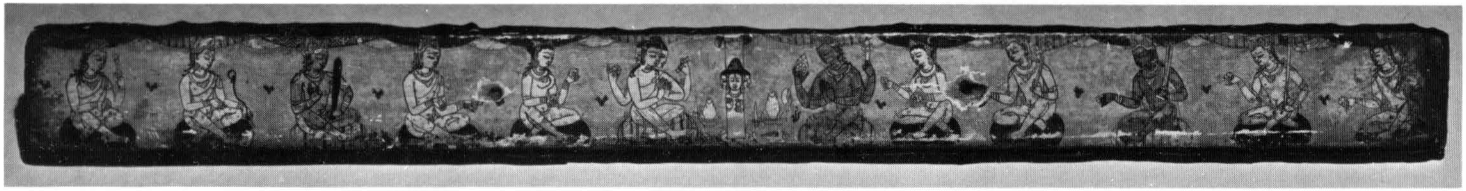
50. Man worshipping a horse, From a Buddhist ms., 19th century, Private Collection.



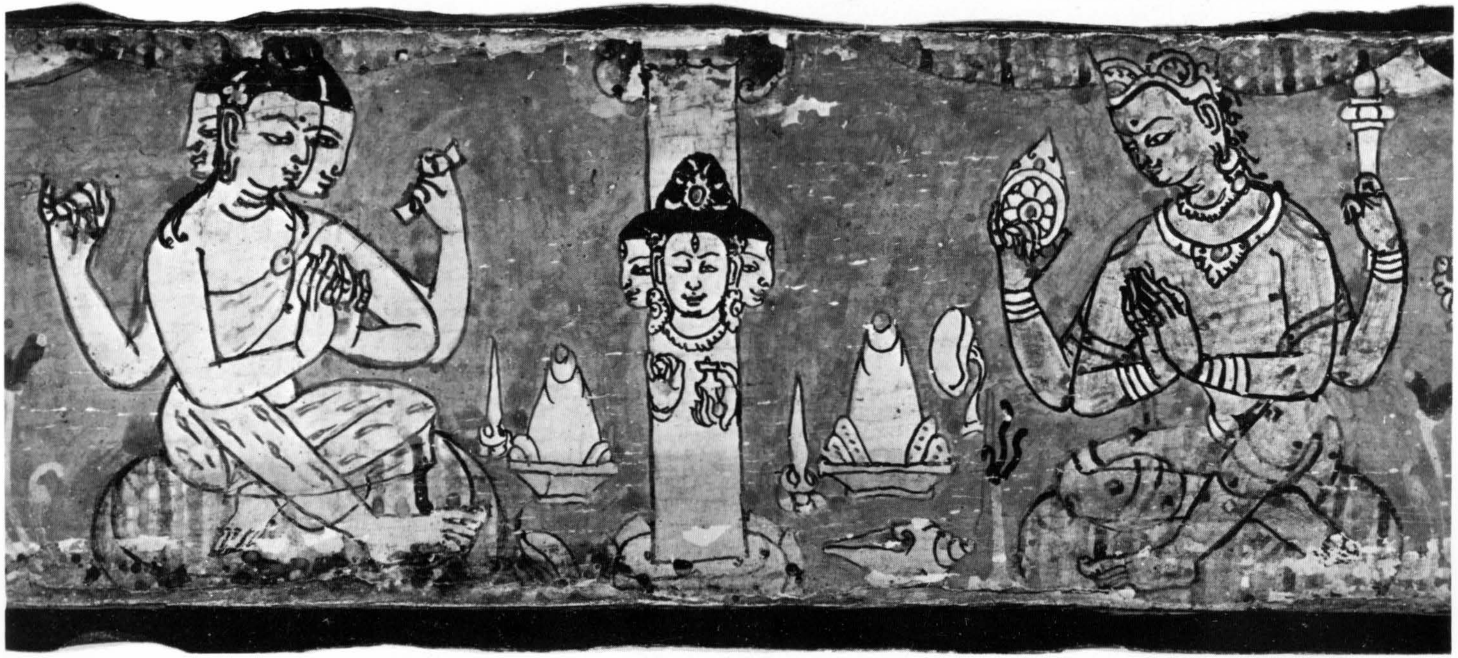
51. Covers of a Vaiṣṇava ms., 11th century, H. 5 cm., W. 56 cm. The British Museum.



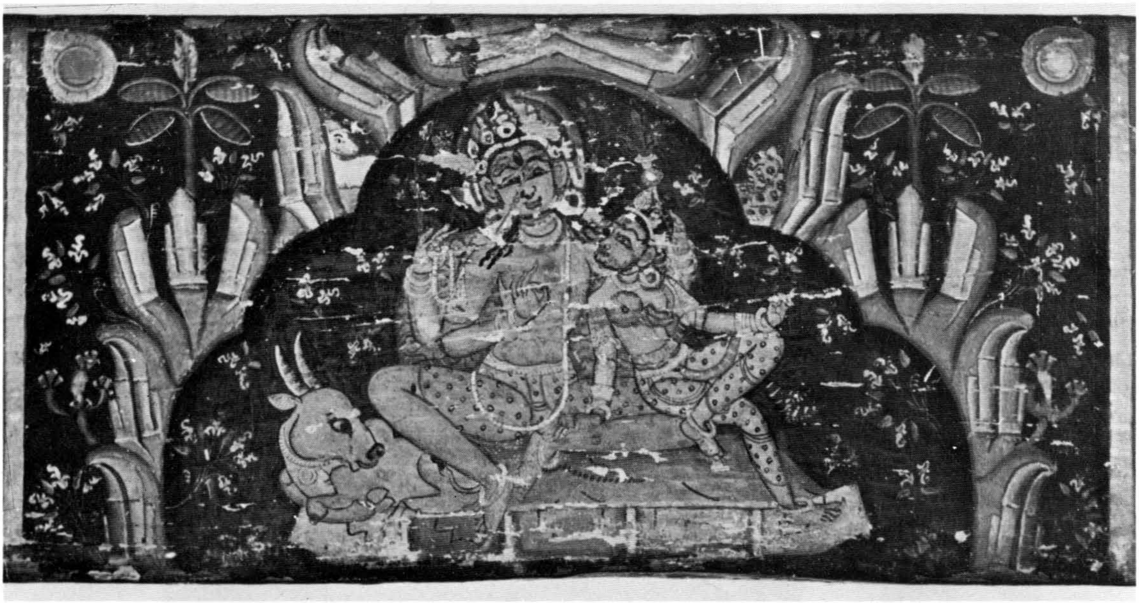
52. Cover of a *Śivadharma* ms., 12th century, H. 9.8 cm., W. 53.8 cm. The National Library, Kathmandu.



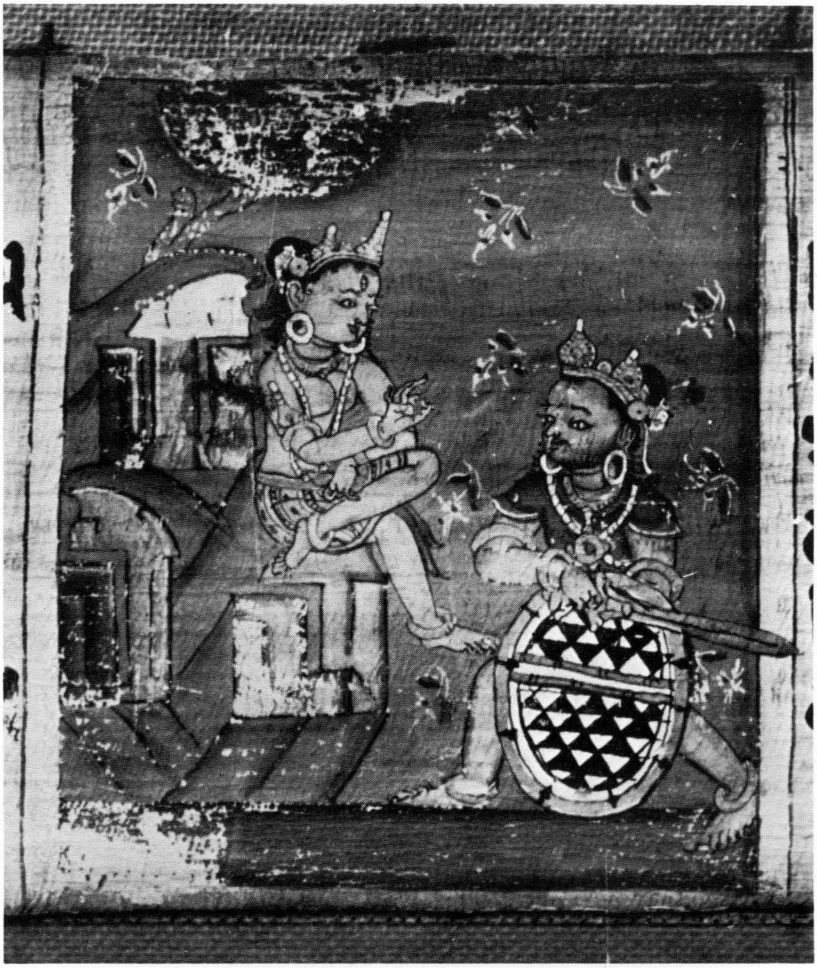
53. Cover of a *Śaiva* ms., 12th century, H. 4.5 cm., W. 57.2 cm. Mr. and Mrs. John G. Ford Collection, Baltimore.



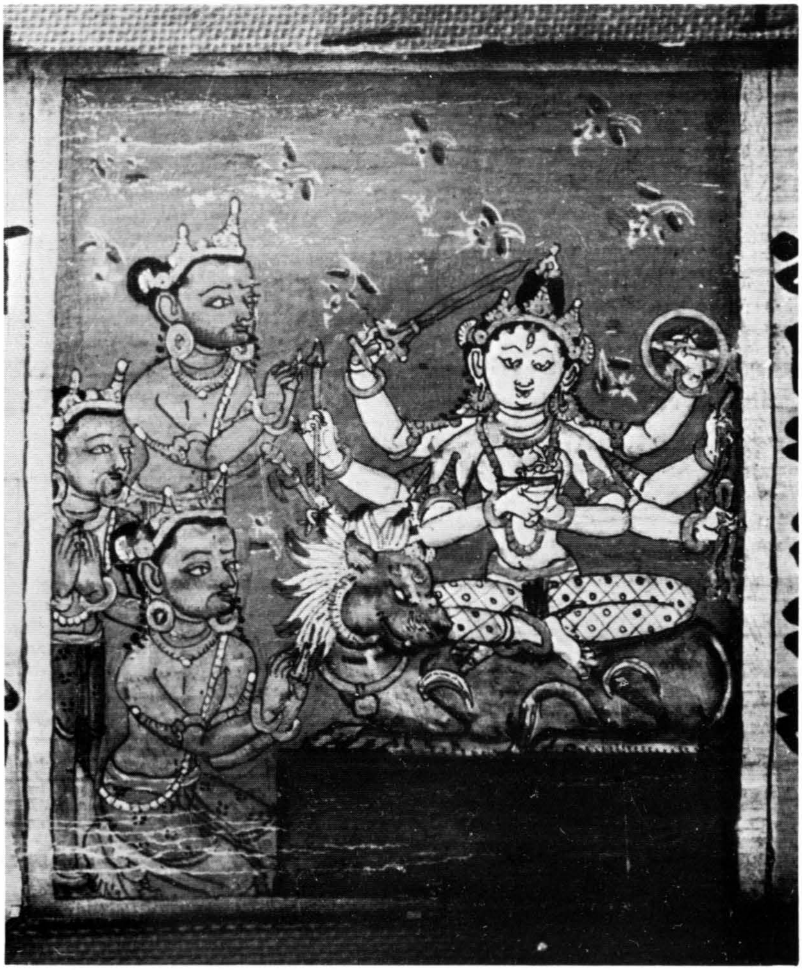
53b. Detail of Fig. 53.



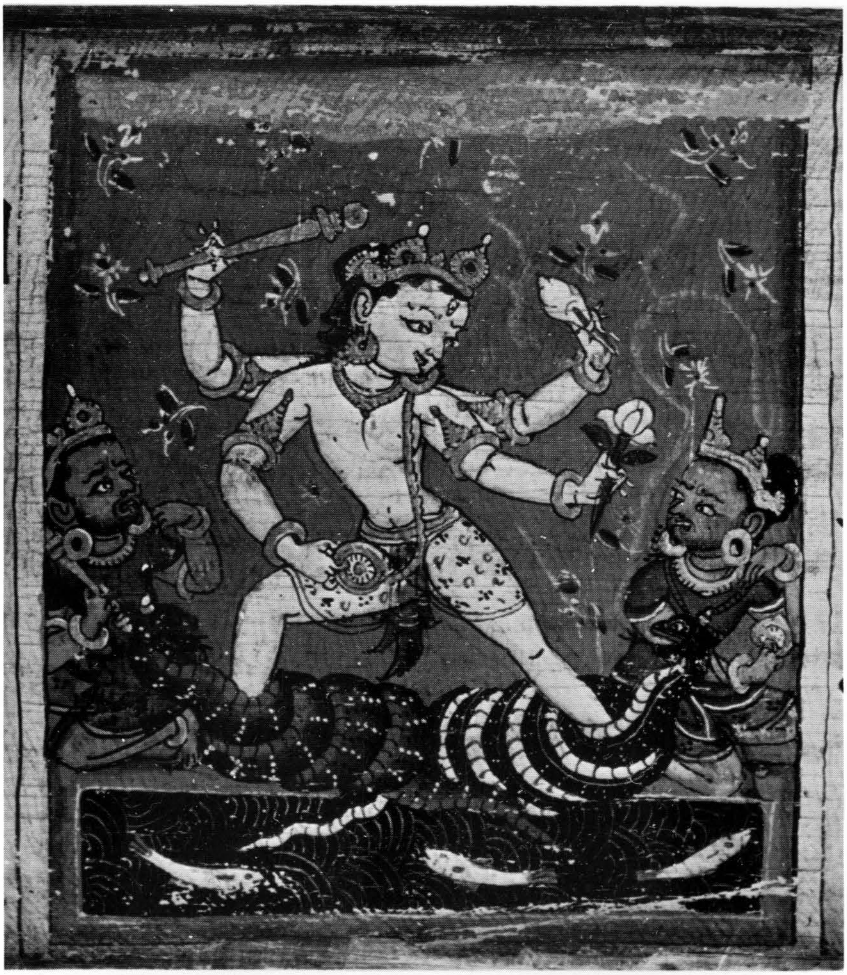
54. Śiva and Pārvati, Cover of a *Śivadharma* ms., 1139. University Library, Cambridge.



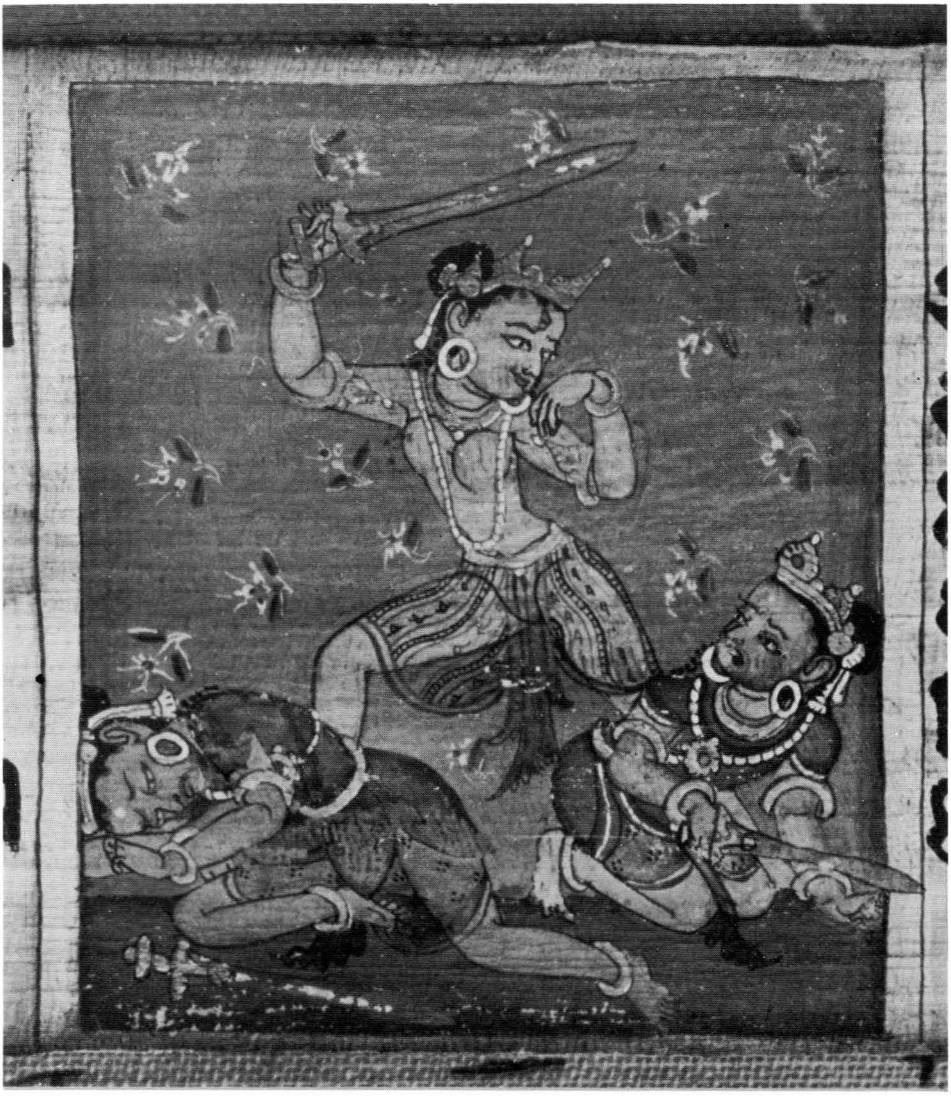
55. Durgā receives Mahiṣāsura's messenger, *Devīmāhātmya* ms., 14th century, H. 6 cm., W. 5 cm. (ill. only) Bharat Kala Bhavan.



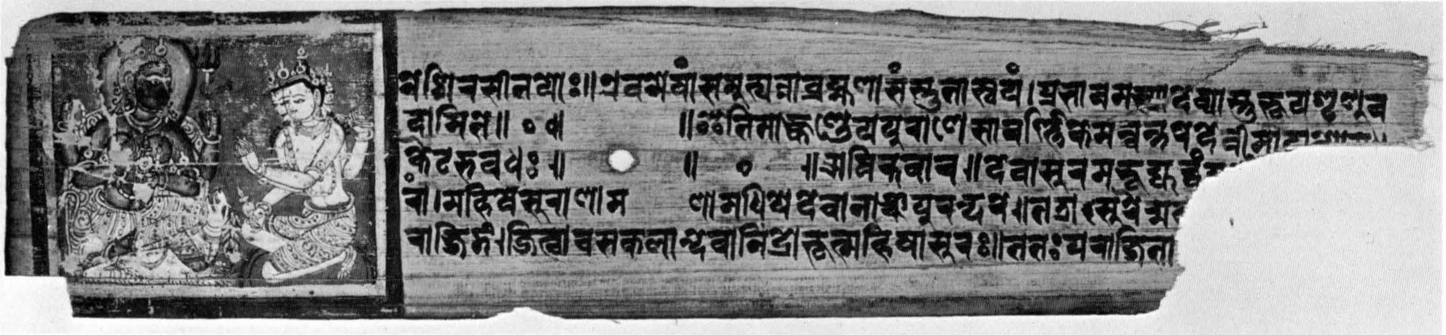
56. The worship of Durgā, from the same ms. as Fig. 55.



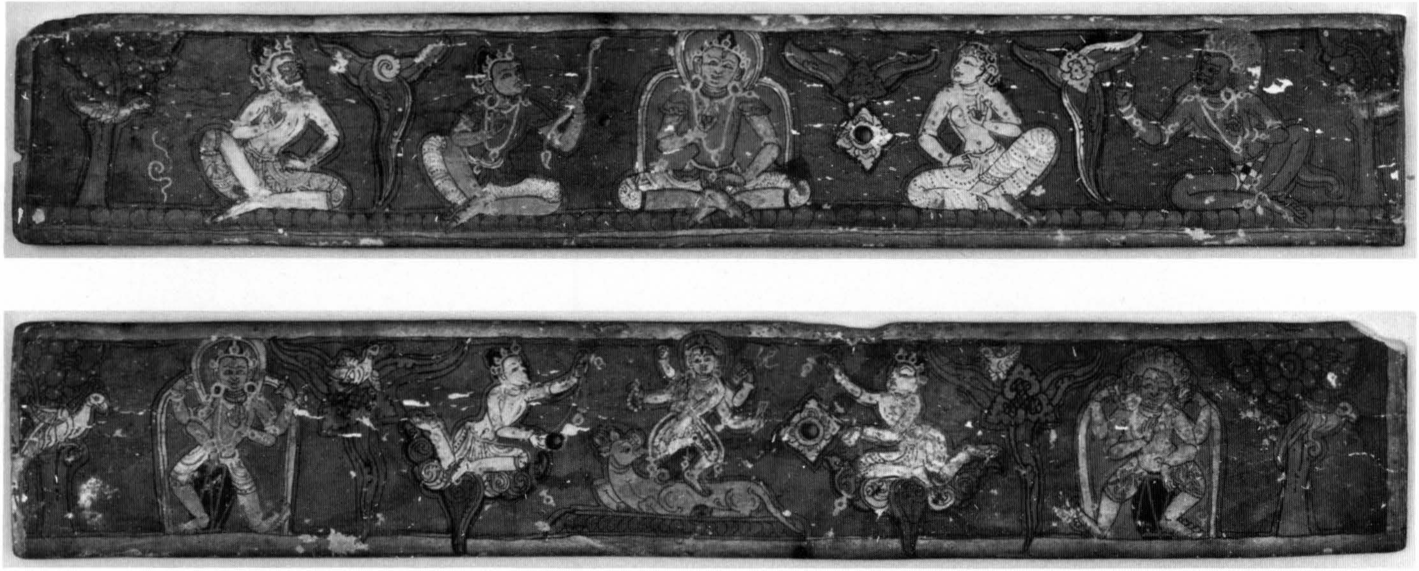
57. Viṣṇu destroying Madhu and Kaiṭabha, from the same ms. as Fig. 55.



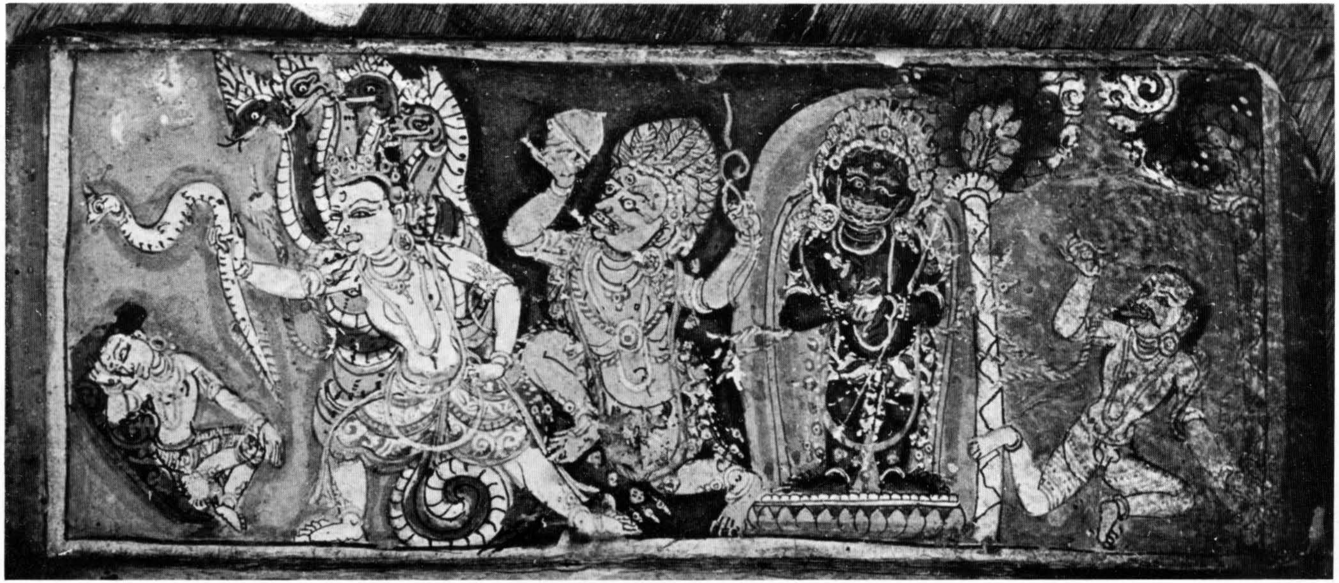
58. Durgā destroying Śumbha and Niśumbha, from the same ms. as Fig. 55.



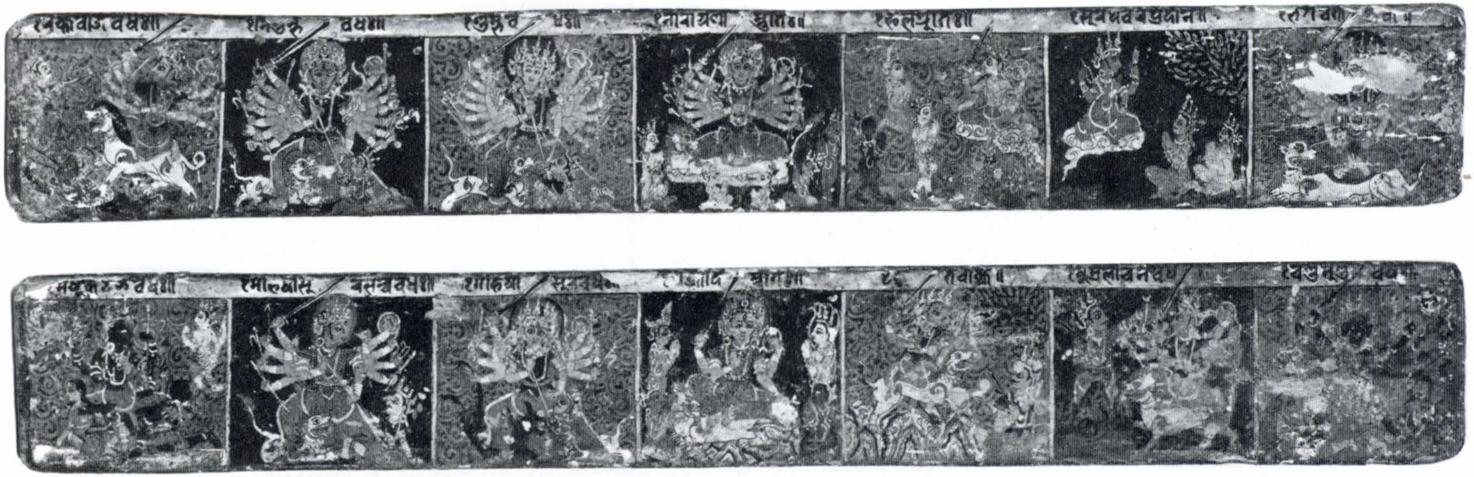
59. Brahmā adoring Kālī, *Devīmāhātmya* ms., 15th century, H. 5.1 cm. Freer Gallery of Art.



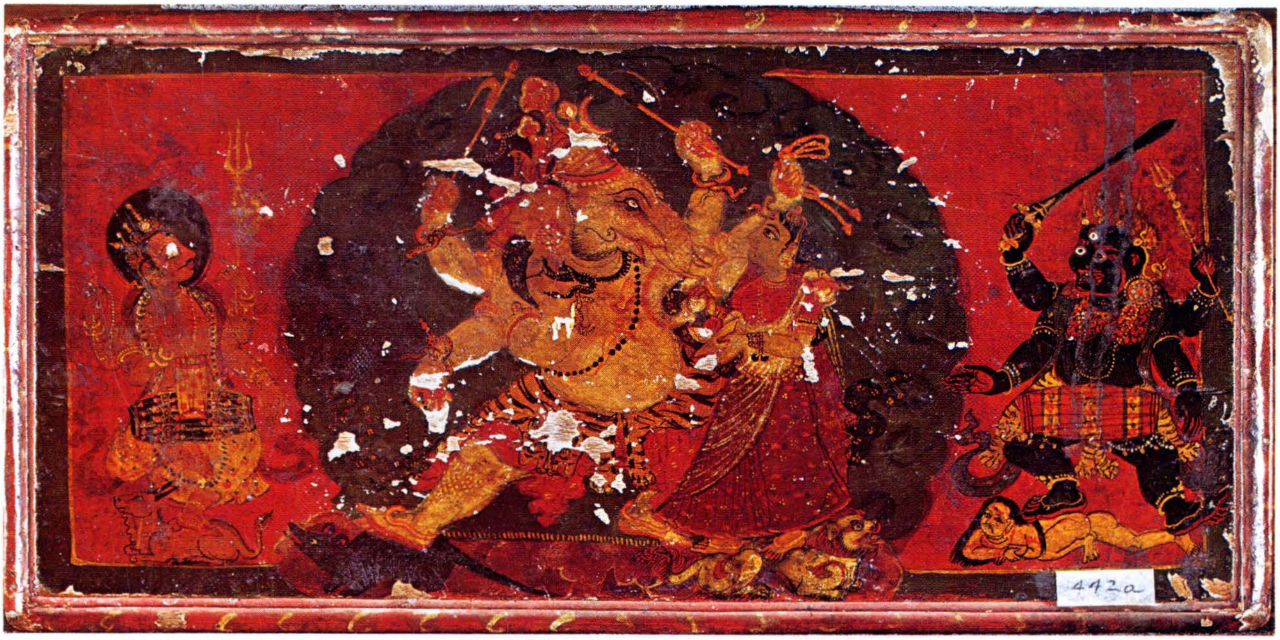
60. Covers (15th c.) of a Hindu ms., 1235, H. 5.1 cm., W. 30.5 cm. Doris Wiener Gallery.



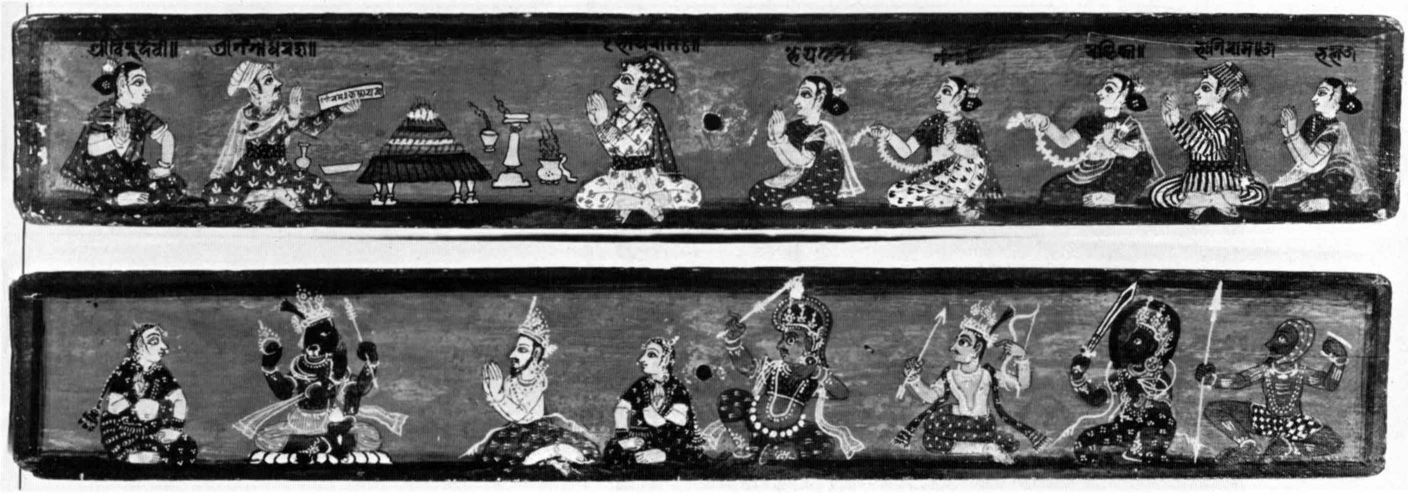
61. *Pujāvidhi* ms., 1573, The Asiatic Society, Calcutta.



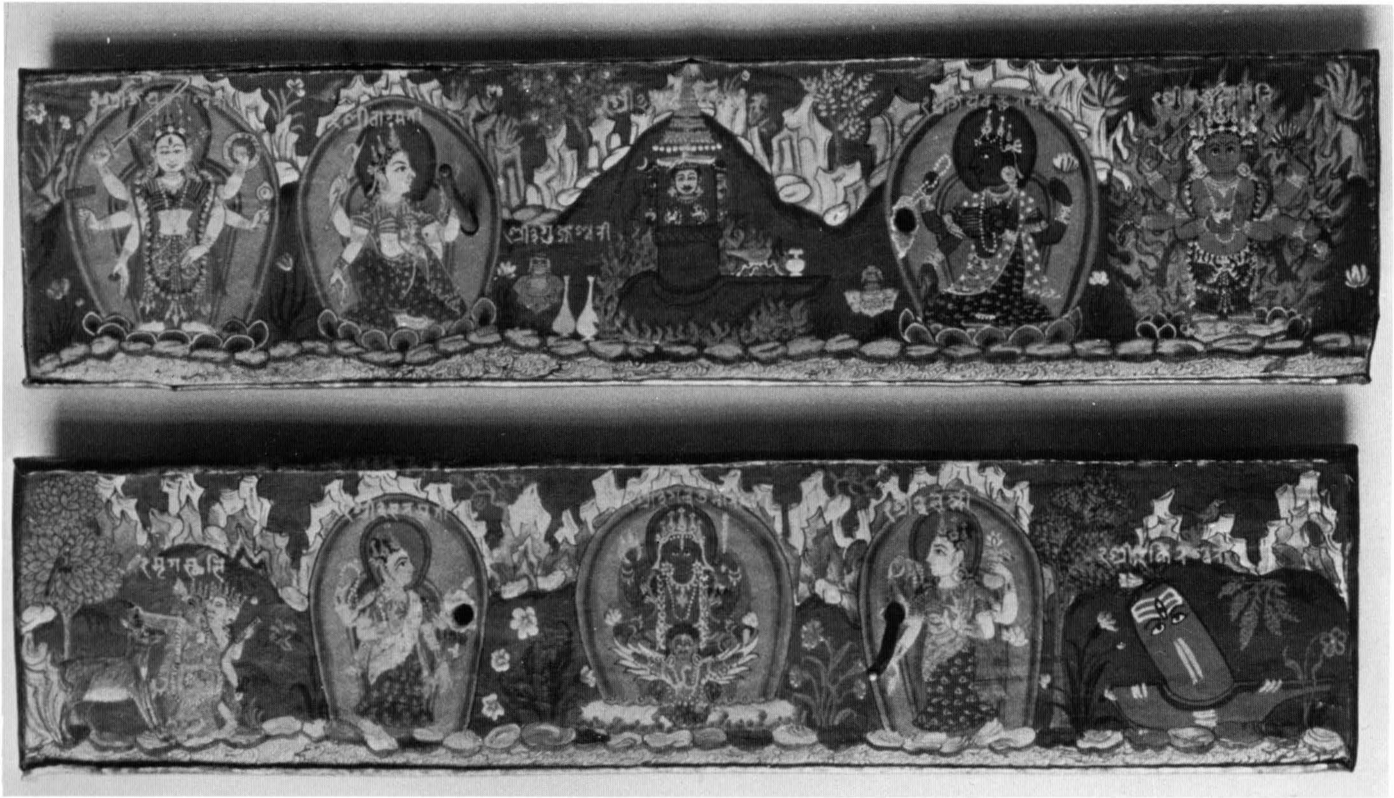
62. Covers of a *Devīmāhātmya* ms., 17th century, H. 4.8 cm., W. 34.9 cm. Doris Wiener Gallery.



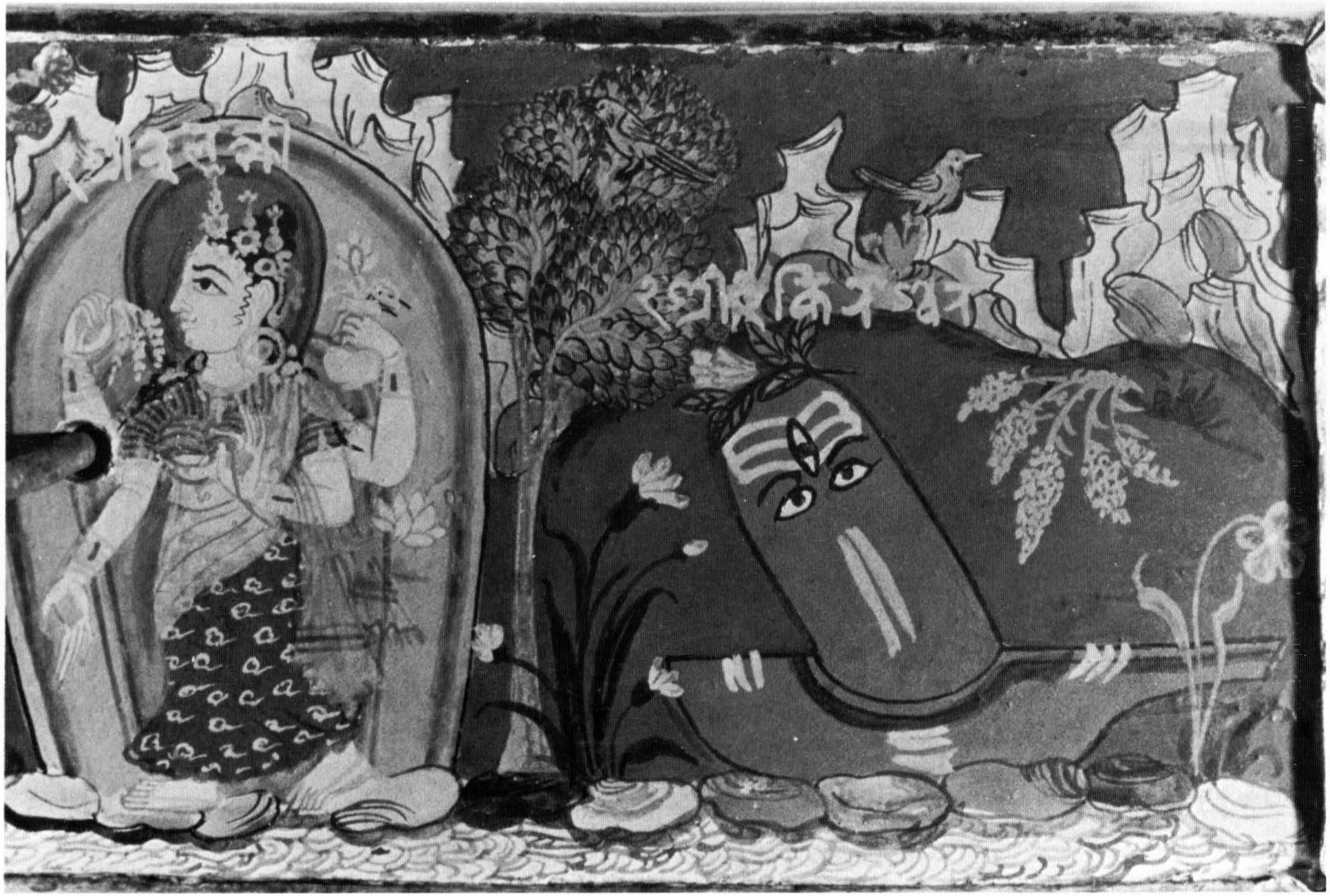
63. Dancing Gaṇeśa with companions, Cover of an unknown ms., 1681-84, H. 11.5 cm., W. 25.4 cm. Private Collection.



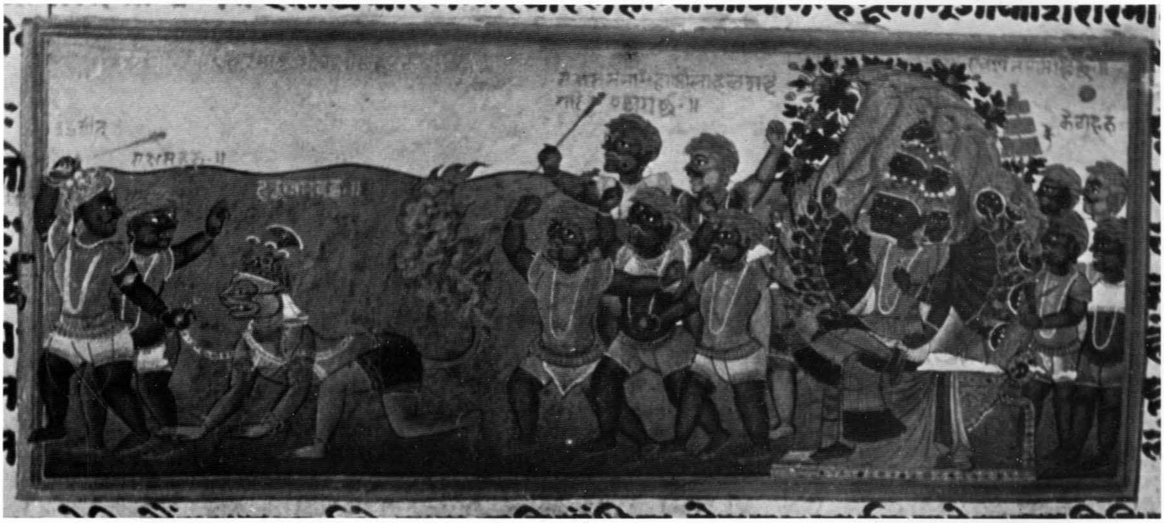
64. Covers of a Vaiṣṇava ms., 17th century, H. 5.7 cm., W. 36.8 cm. Doris Wiener Gallery.



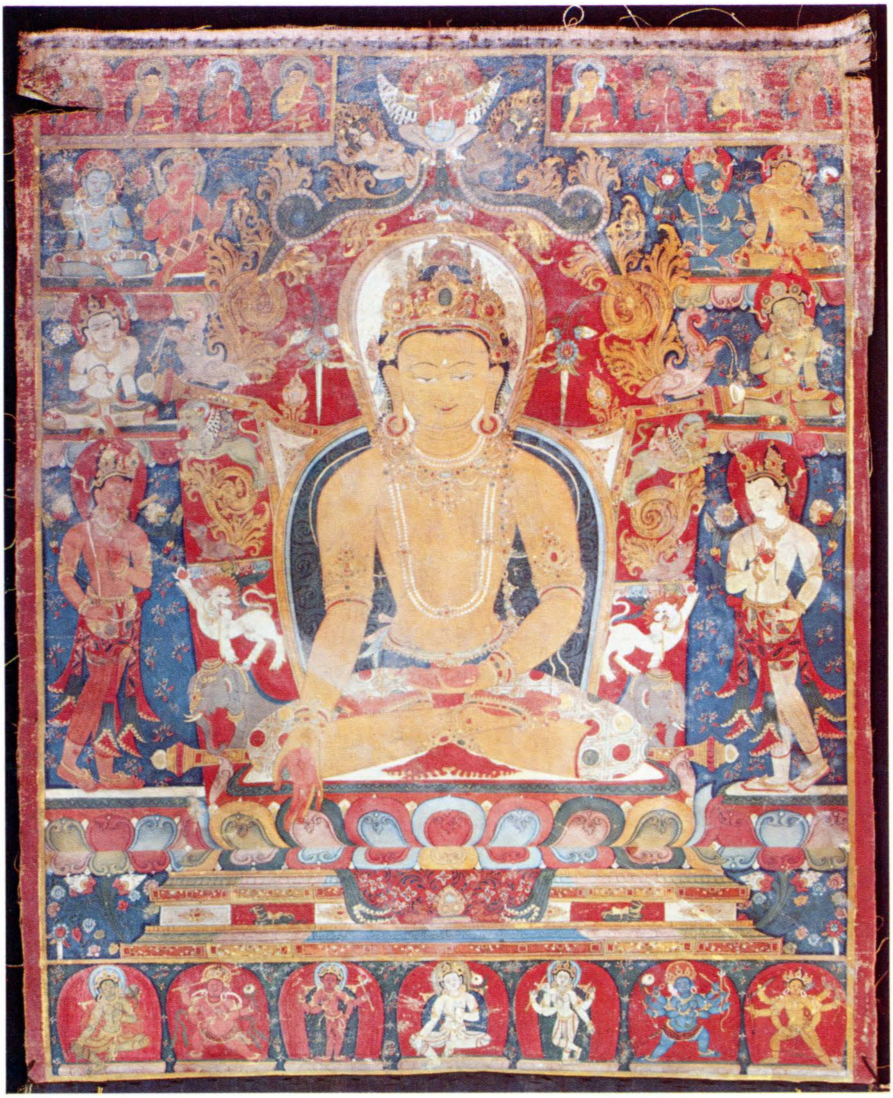
65. Covers of a Śaiva ms., 18th century, H. 8.5 cm., W. 37.2 cm. Mr. and Mrs. H. K. Swali Collection.



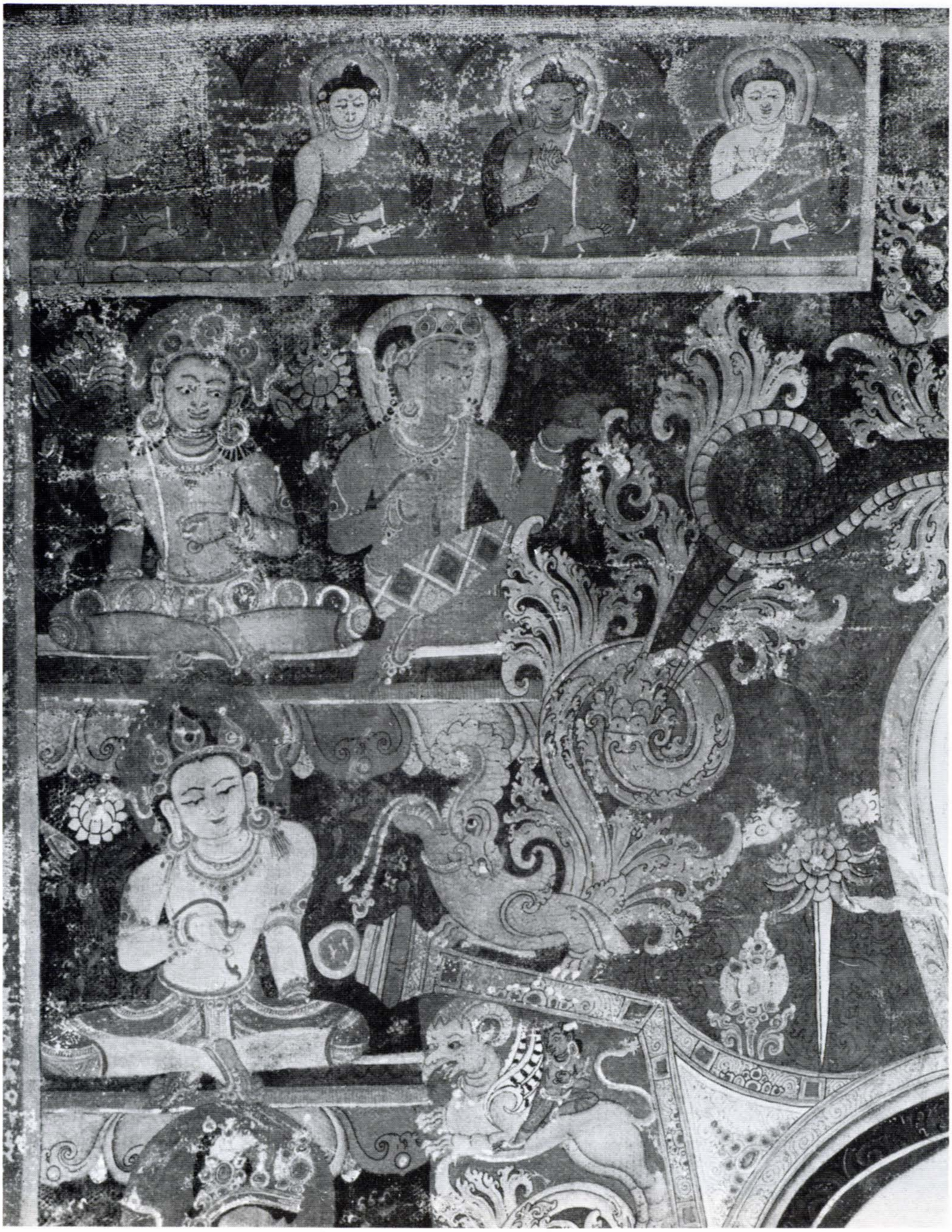
66. Detail of Fig. 65.



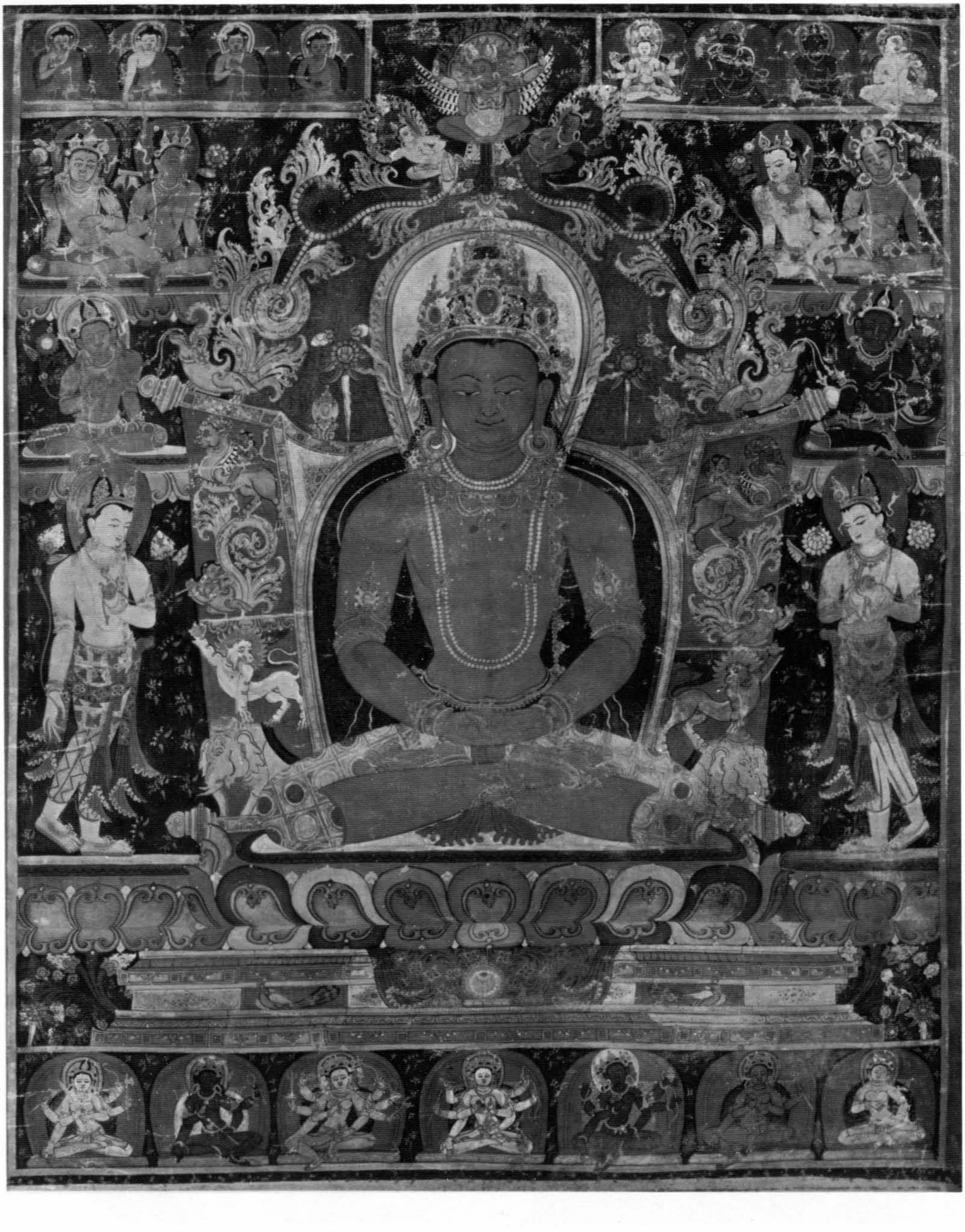
67. Humiliation of Hanumān, *Rāmāyaṇa* ms., 19th century, National Library, Kathmandu.



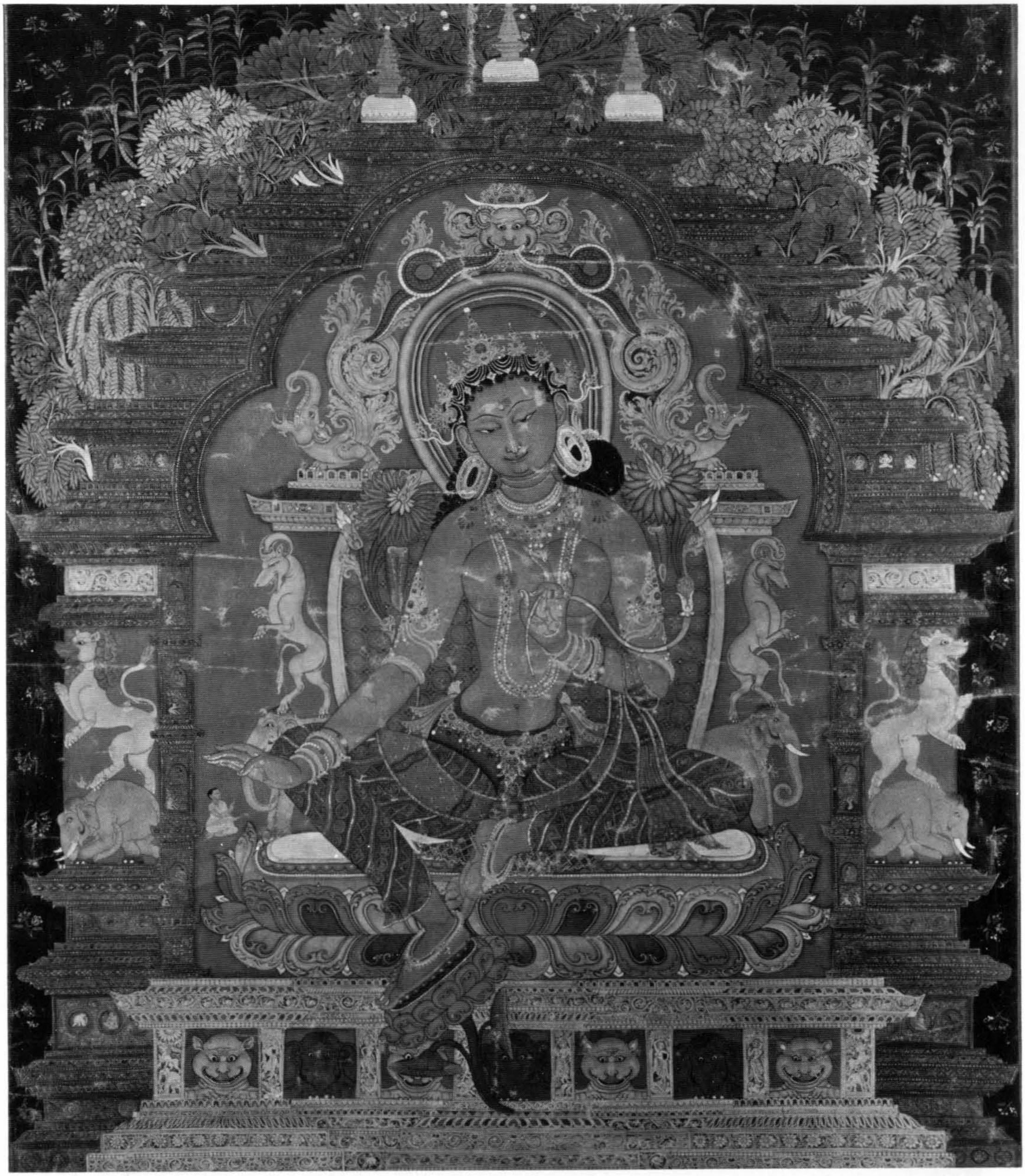
68. Tathāgata Ratnasambhava and acolytes, 13th century, H. 41 cm. From the Nasli and Alice Heeramaneck Collection, Los Angeles County Museum of Art.



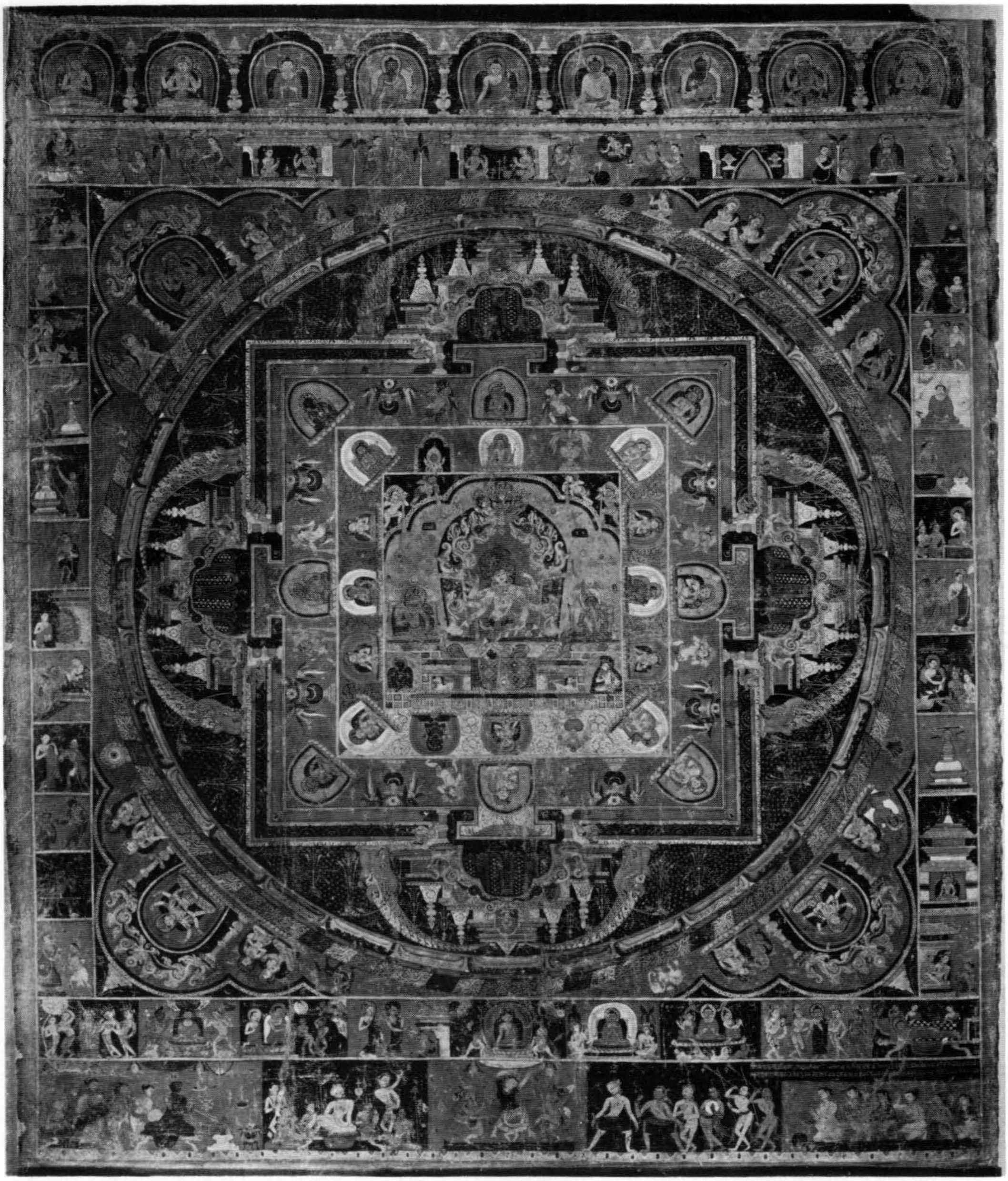
69. Detail of Fig. 68.



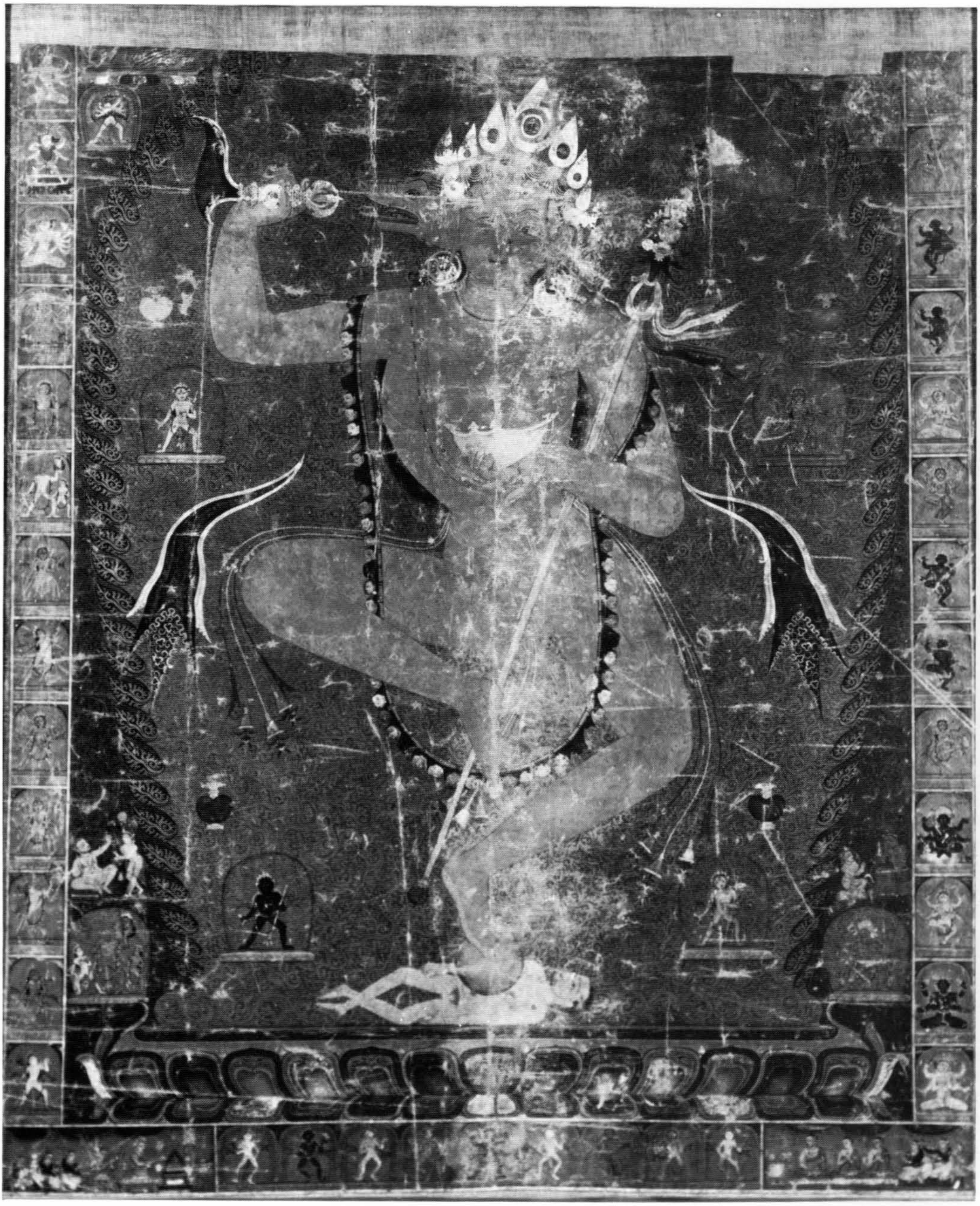
70. Tathāgata Amitābha and acolytes, 13th century, H. 41.3 cm. Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, Gift of John Goelet.



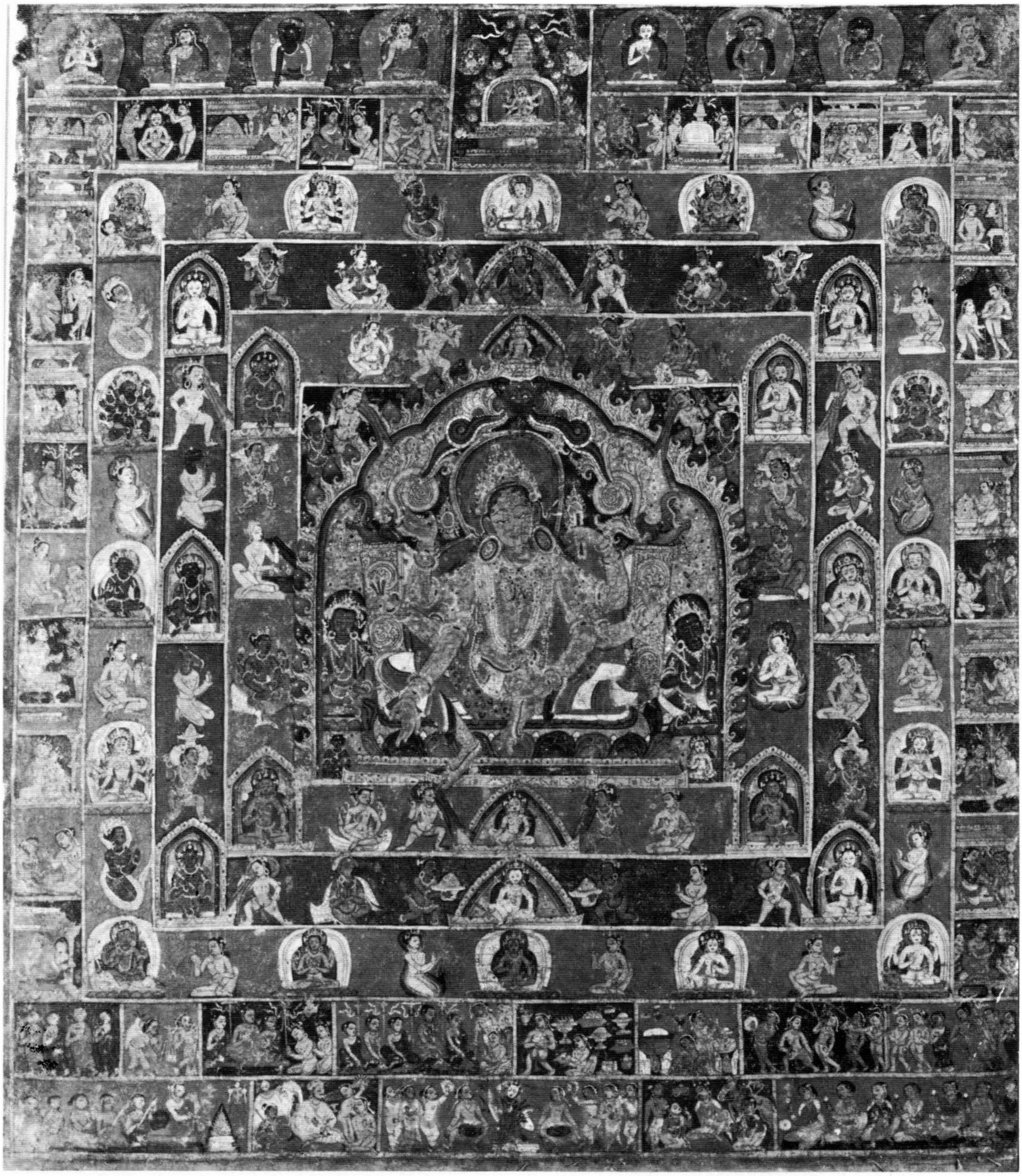
71. The Goddess Tārā, 13th century, H. 52.1 cm. The Cleveland Museum of Art, the J. H. Wade Fund, by exchange.



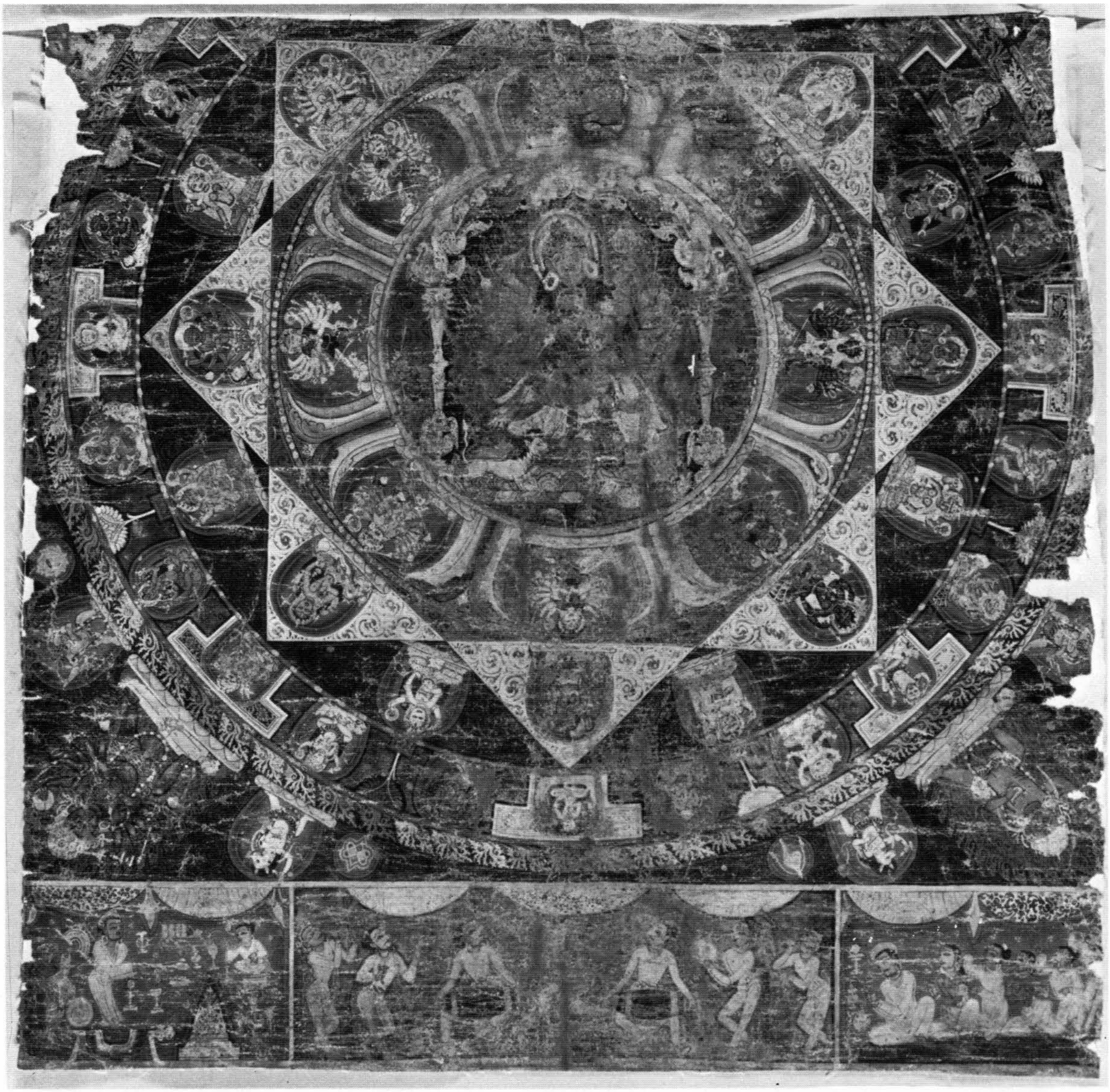
72. Vasudhārāmandala, 1367, H. 1 m. 3 cm. Private Collection.



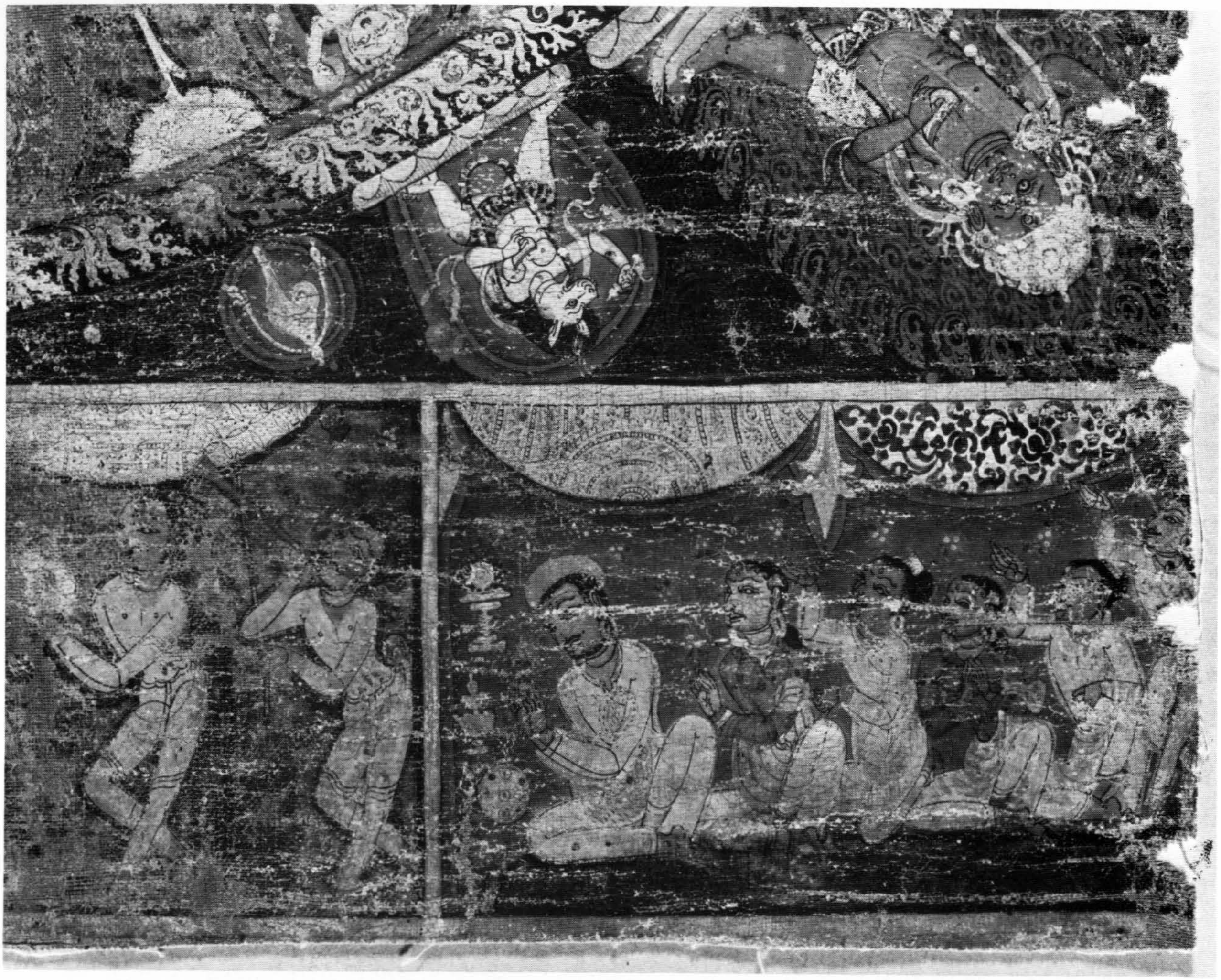
73. Vajravārāhī and other goddesses, 1350-1400, H. 1 m. 17 cm. Private Collection.



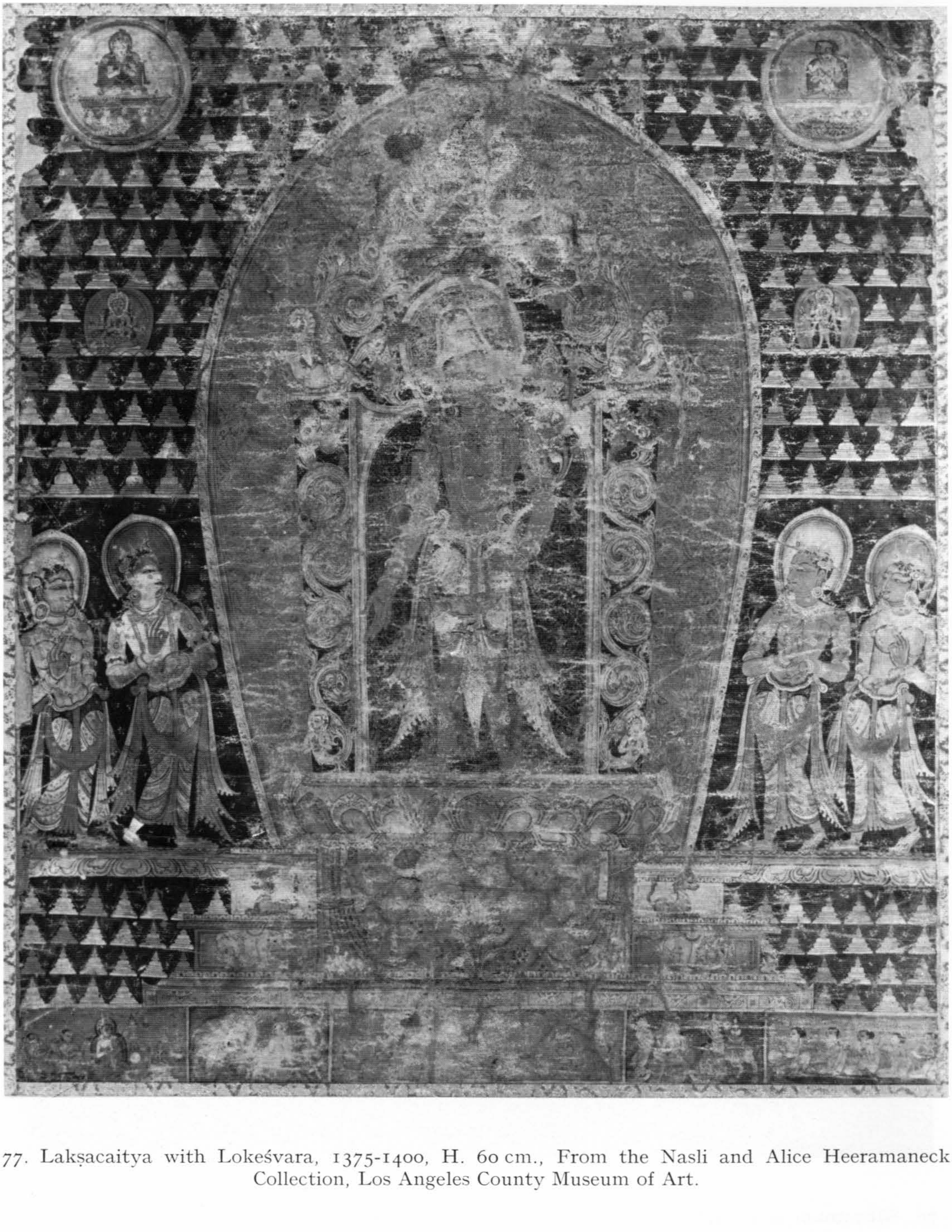
74. Vasudhārāmandala, ca. 1375, H. 66.1 cm., David Salmon Collection, London.



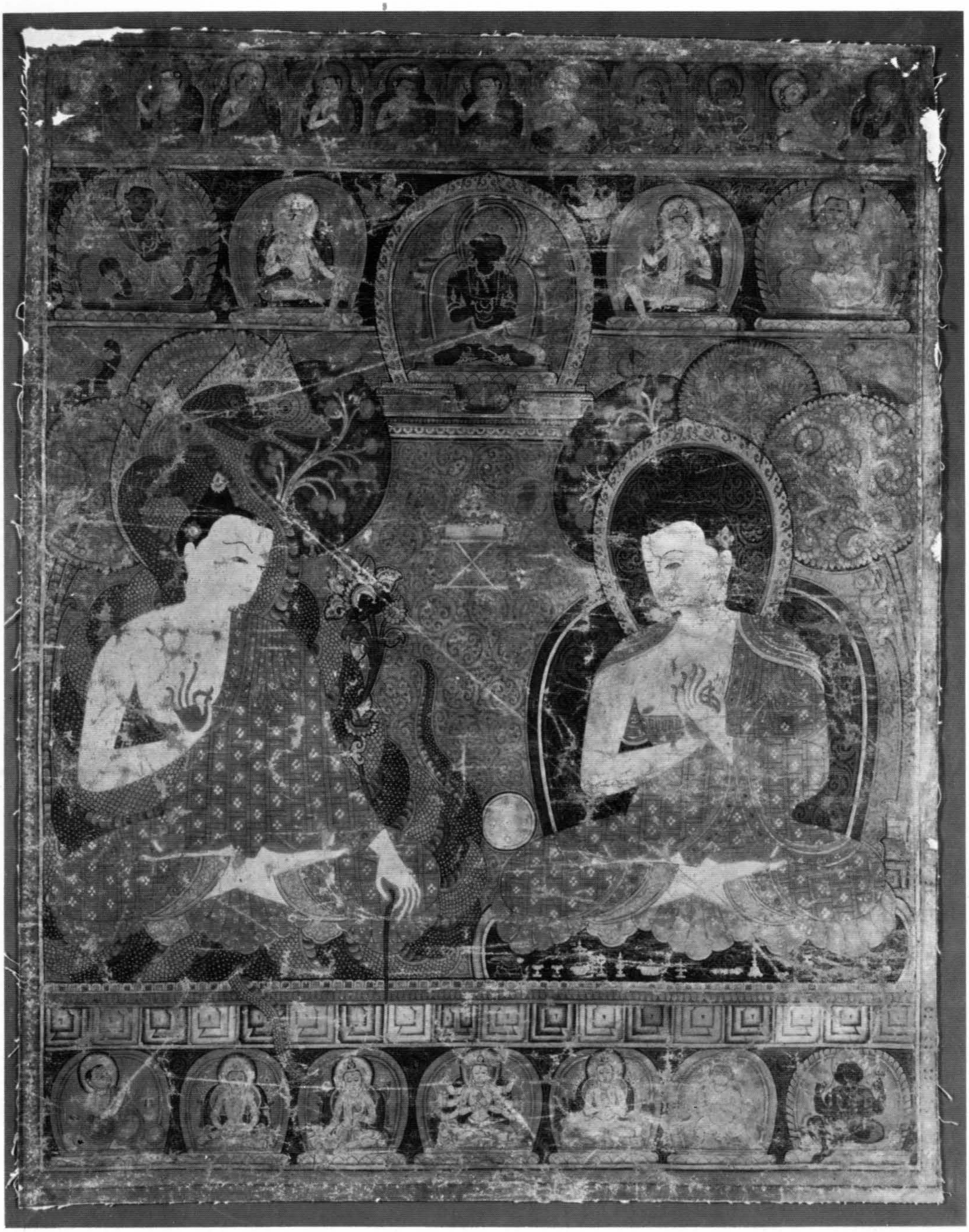
75. Durgāmandala, 1375-1400, H. 50.8 cm. From the Nasli and Alice Heeramaneck Collection, Los Angeles County Museum of Art.



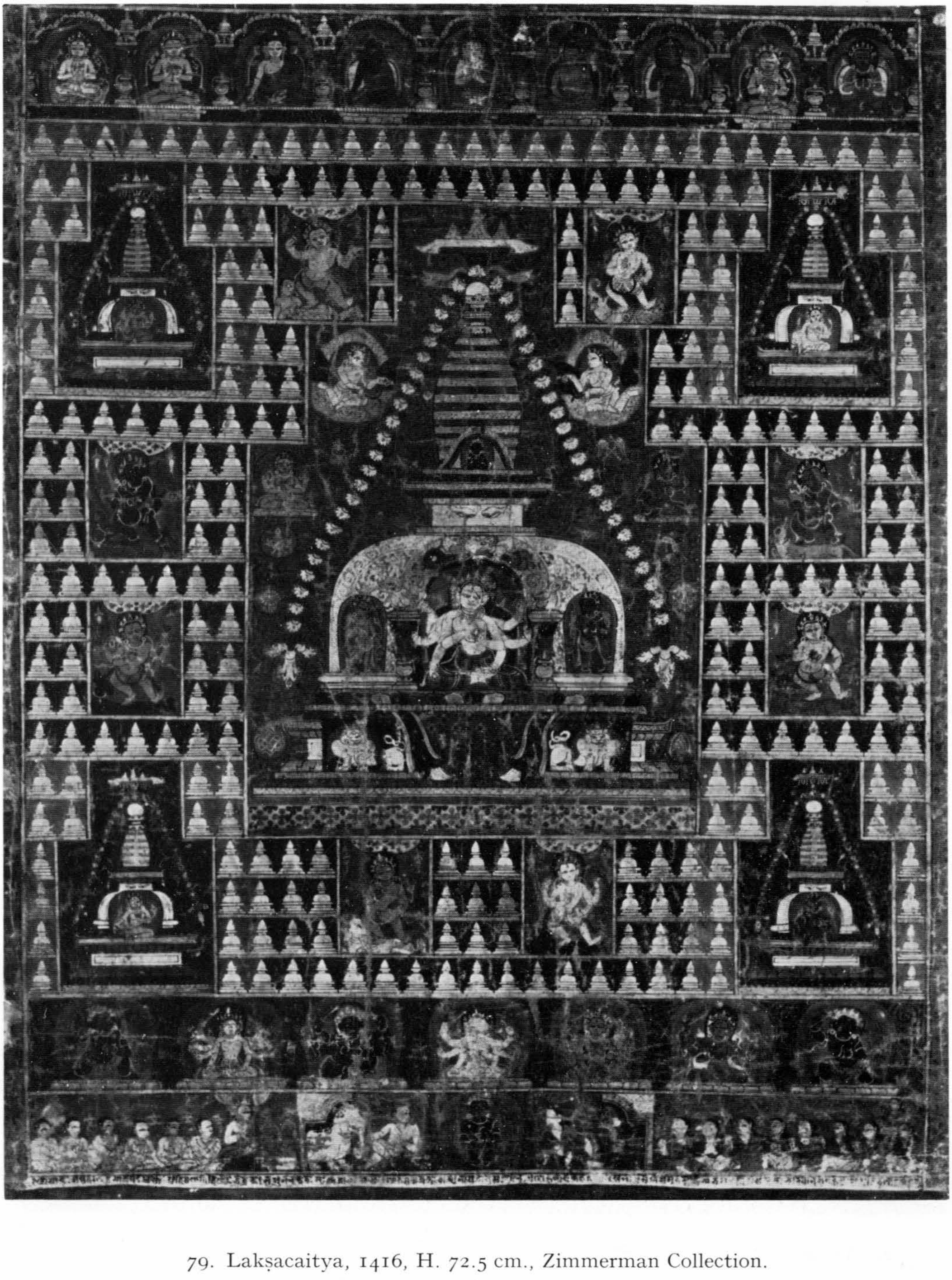
76. Detail of Fig. 75.



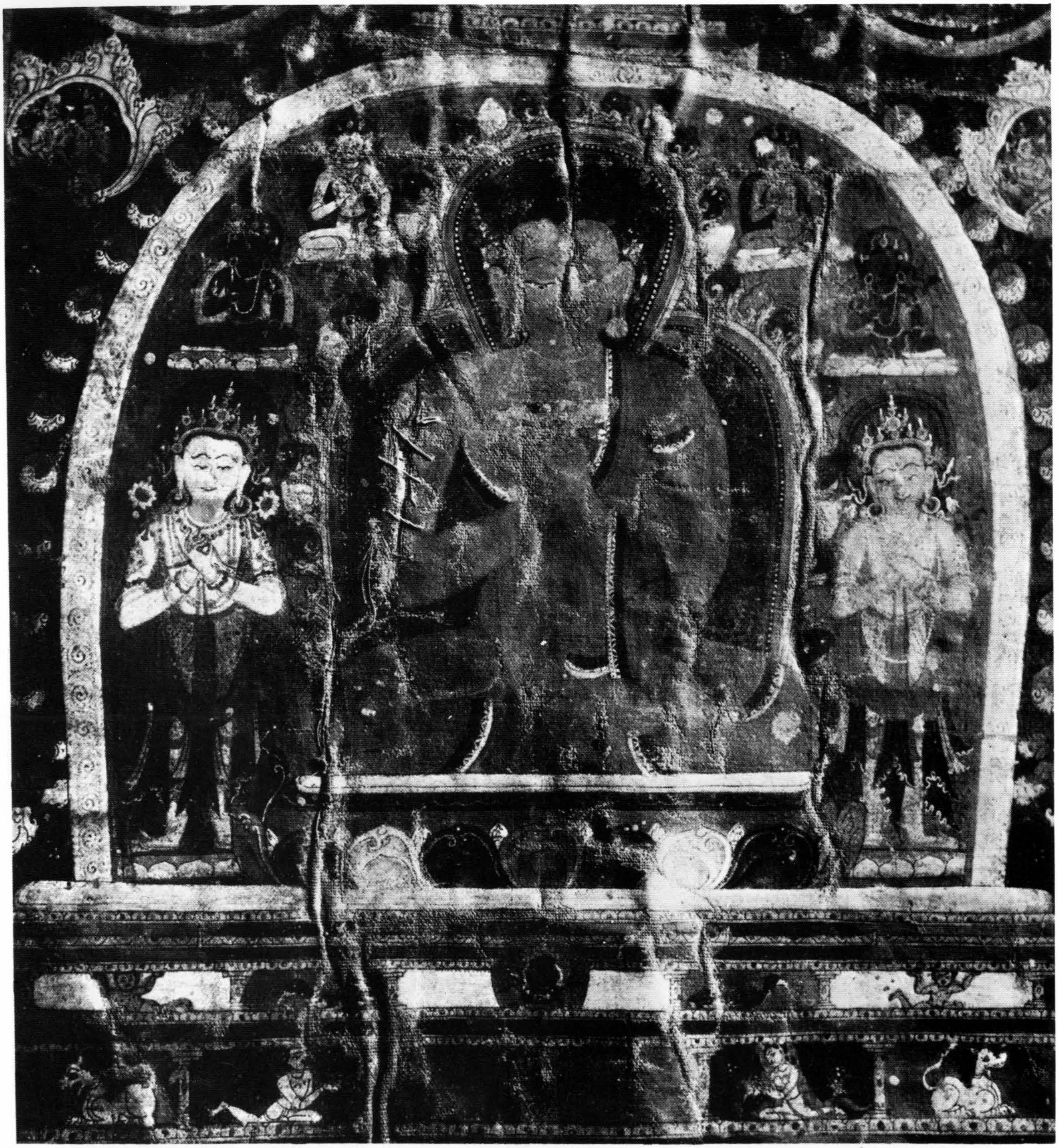
77. Lakṣacaitya with Lokeśvara, 1375-1400, H. 60 cm., From the Nasli and Alice Heeramaneck Collection, Los Angeles County Museum of Art.



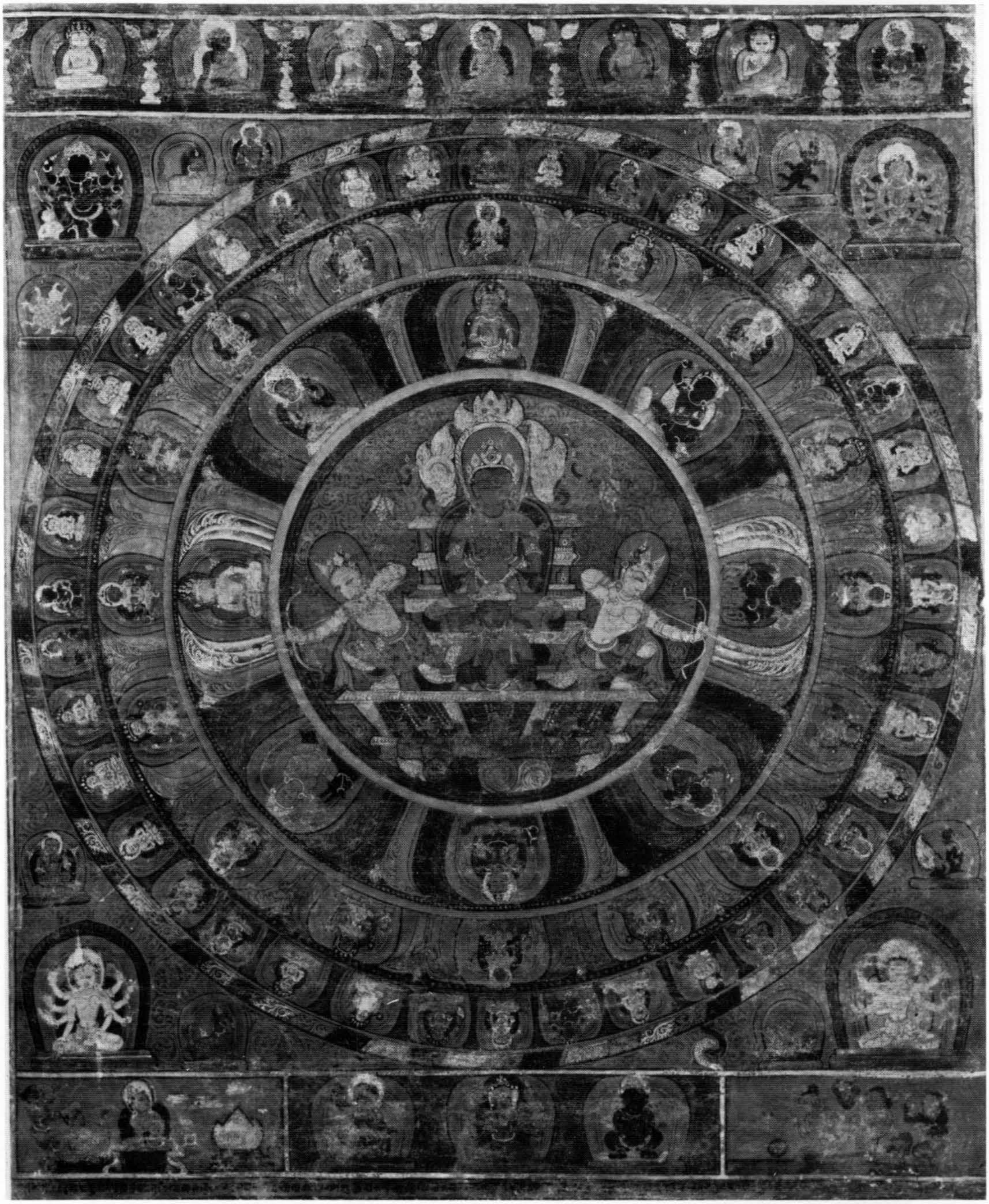
78. Śākyamuni and Nāgārjuna, ca. 1400, H. 57.8 cm. George P. Bickford Collection, Cleveland.



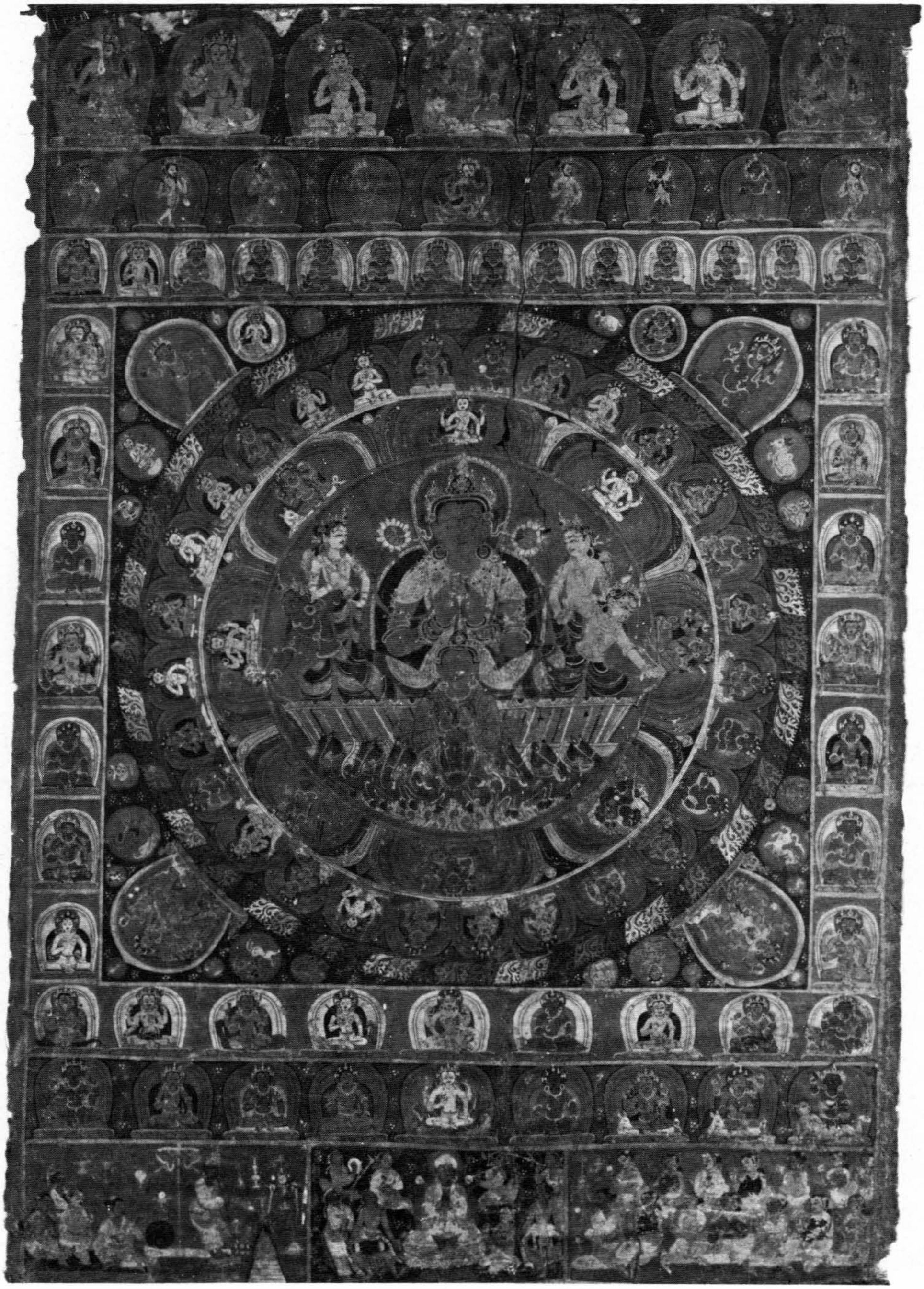
79. Lakṣacaitya, 1416, H. 72.5 cm., Zimmerman Collection.



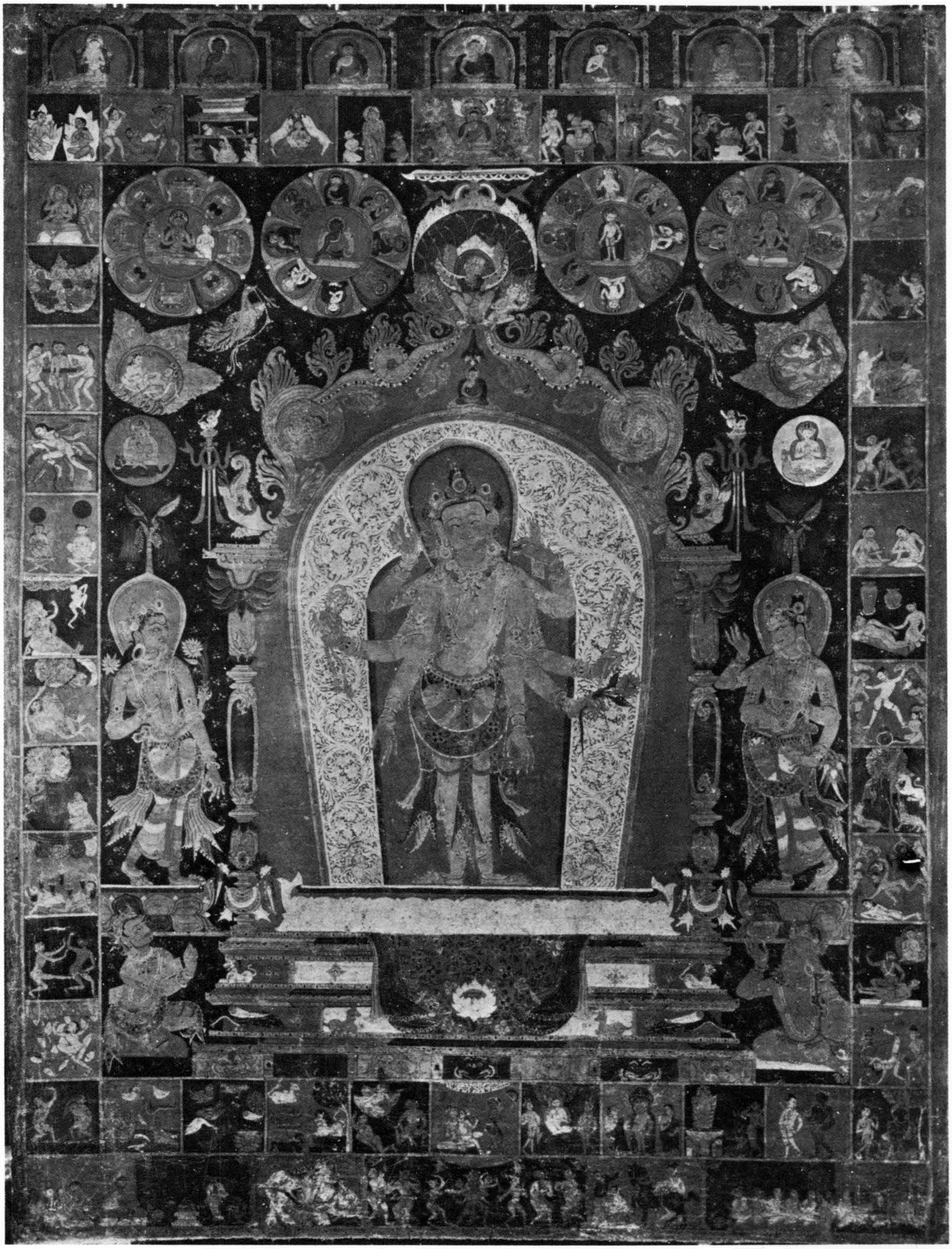
80. Detail of Lakṣacaitya, 1400-25, H. 104 cm., Prince of Wales Museum, Bombay.



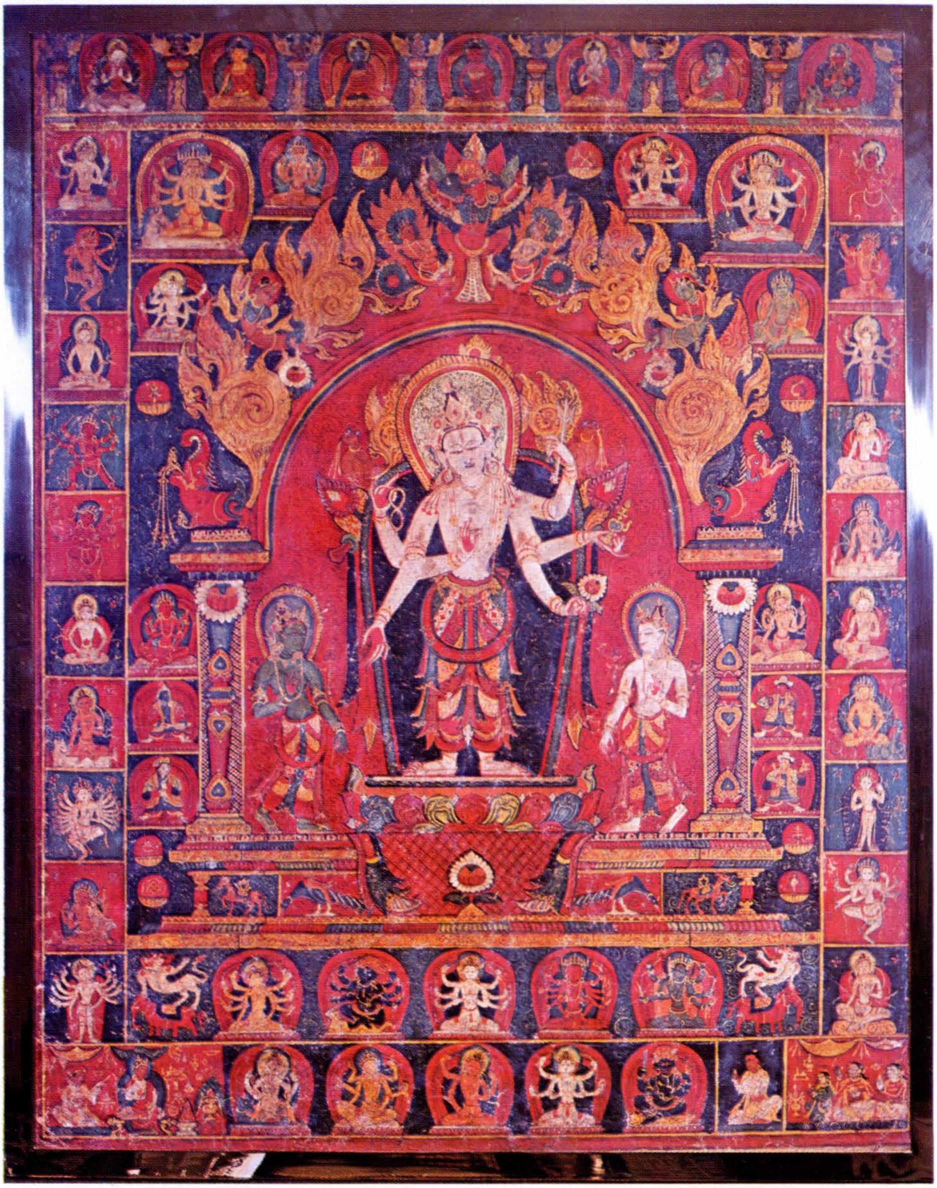
81. Candramandala, 1426, H. 53.3 cm. Zimmerman Collection.



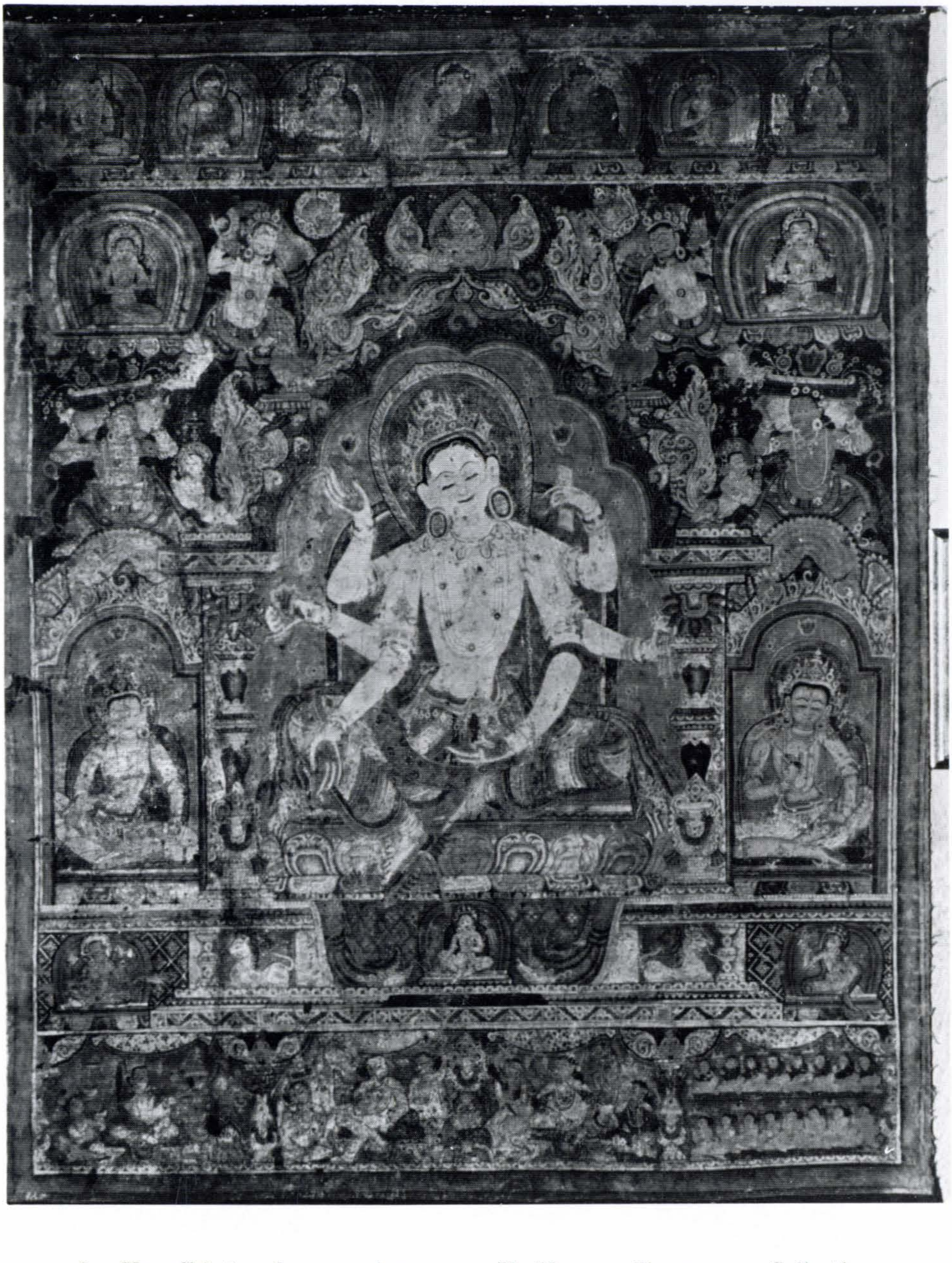
82. Sūryamandala, ca. 1400, H. 85.4 cm., Zimmerman Collection.



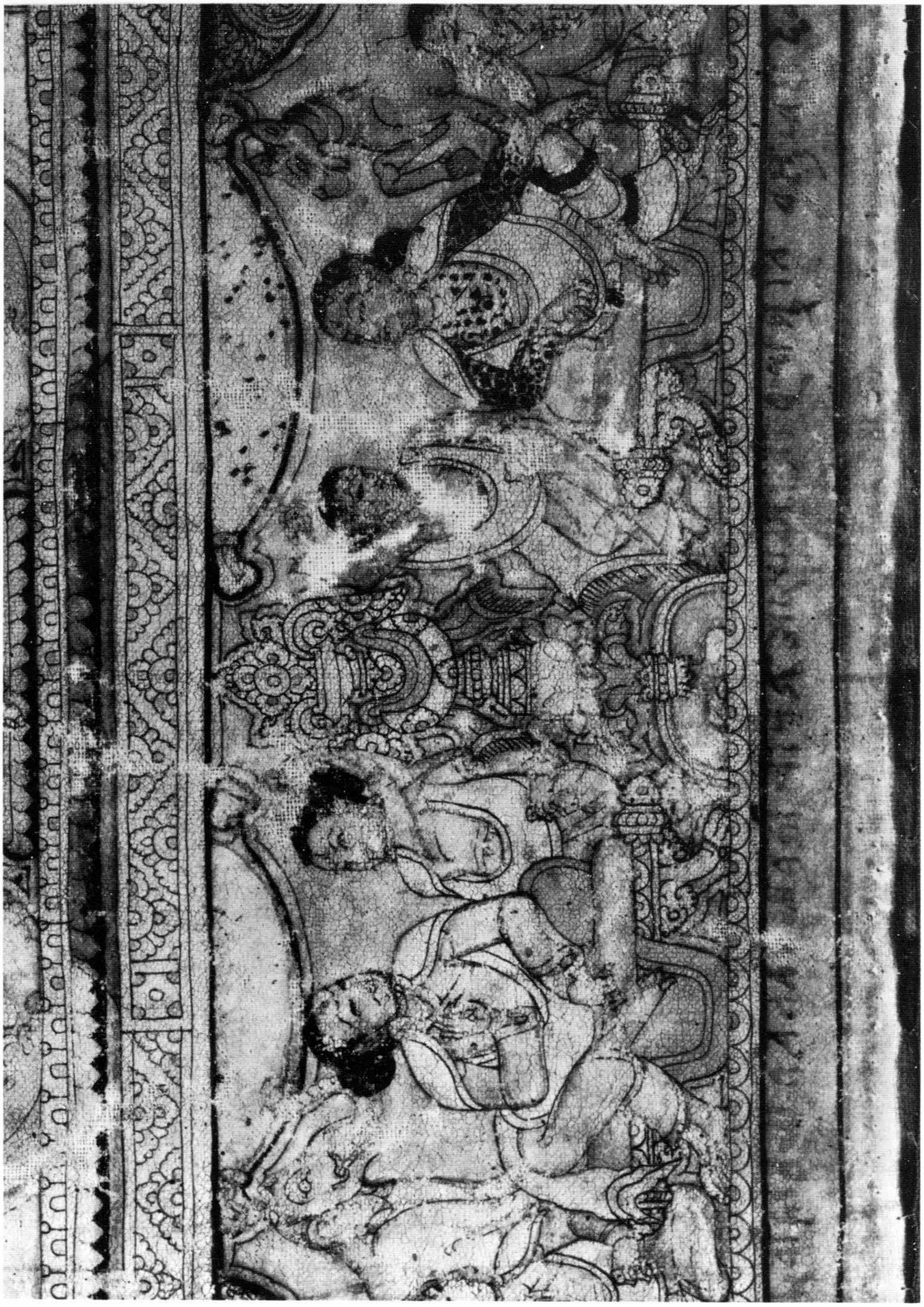
83. Amoghapāśa and companions, 1400-25, H. 90.5 cm., David Tremayne, Ltd.



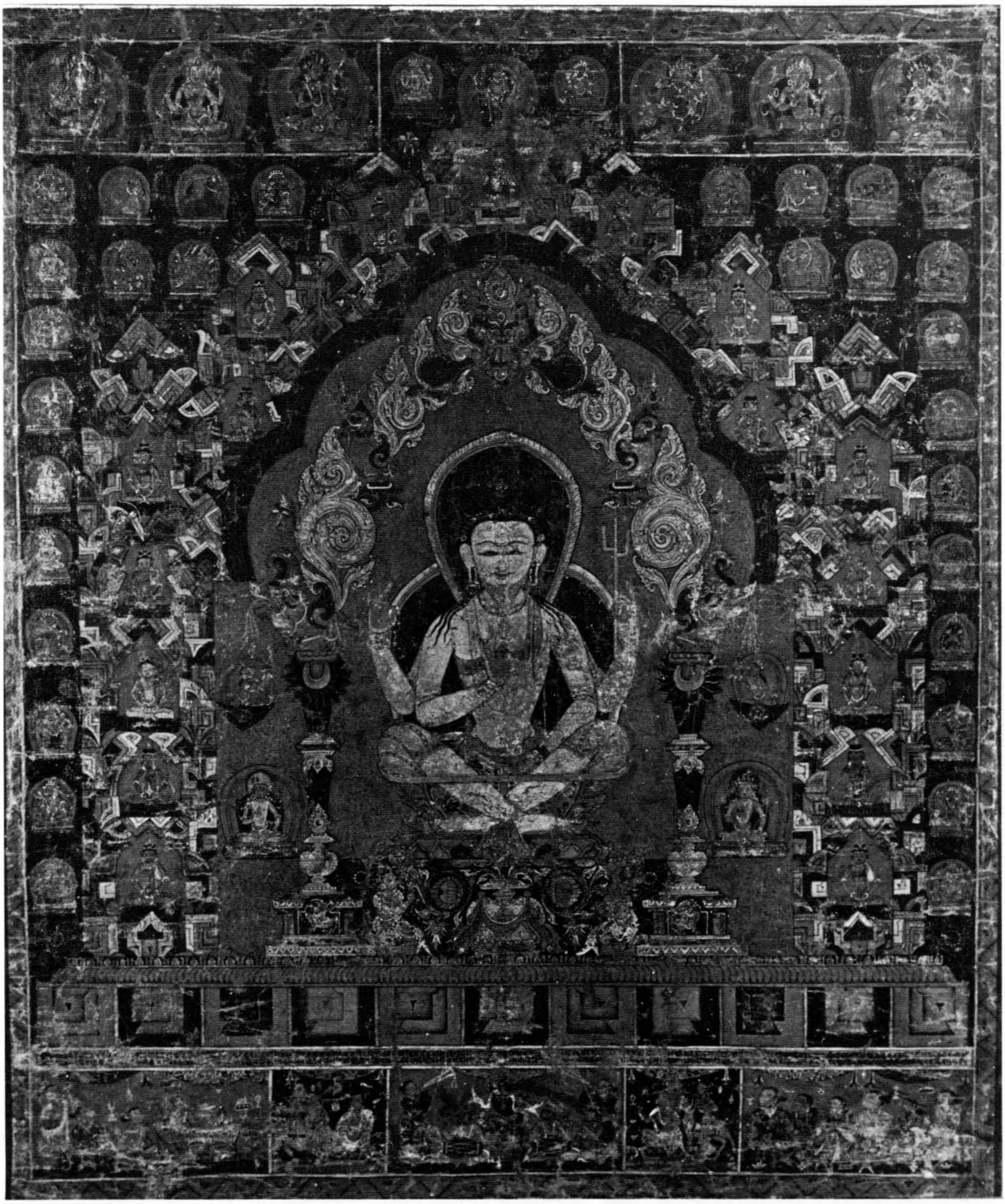
84. Sugatisandarśana Lokeśvara, ca. 1450, 93.3 cm., David Salmon Collection.



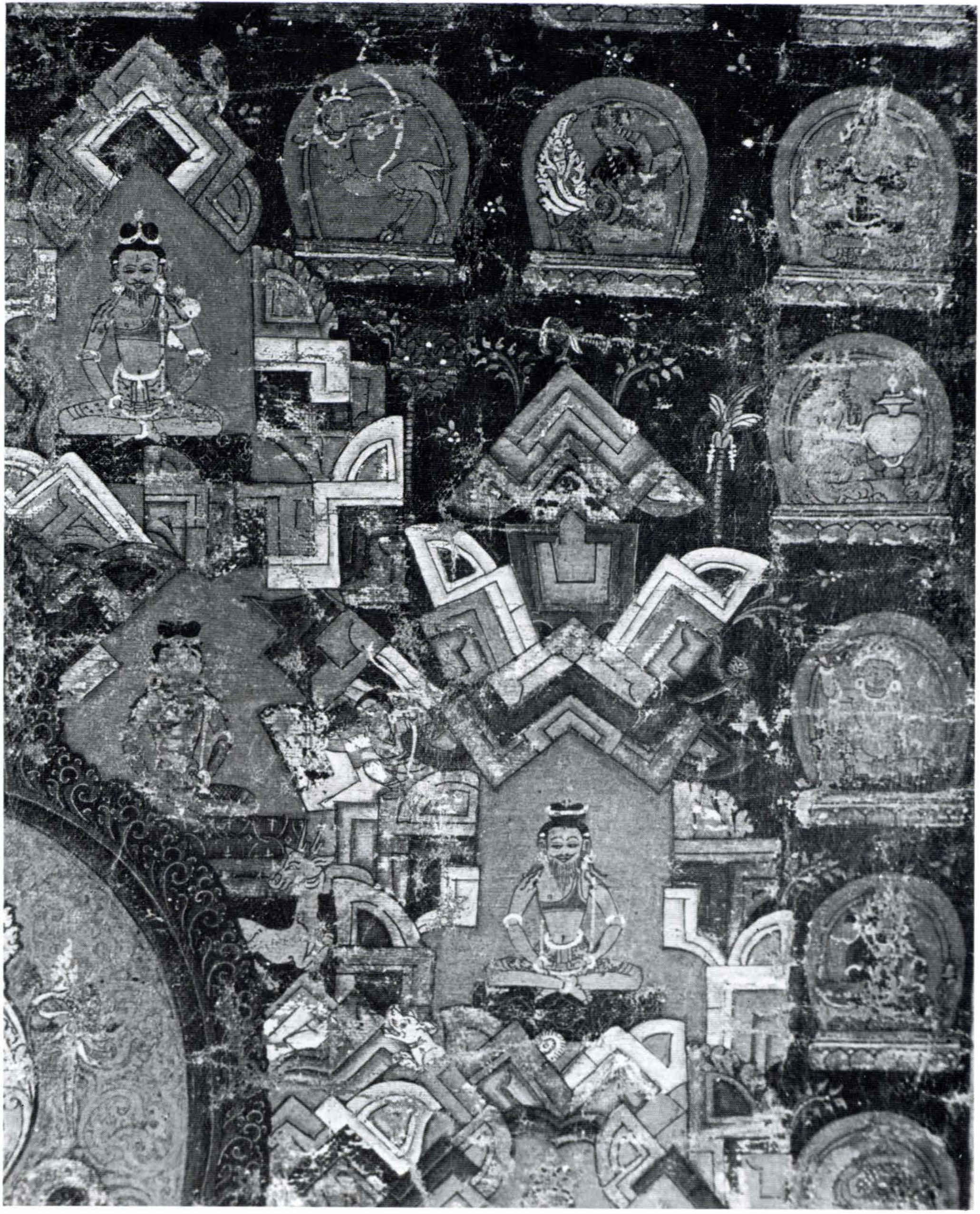
85. Vasudhārā and companions, 1443, H. 68.5 cm. Zimmerman Collection.



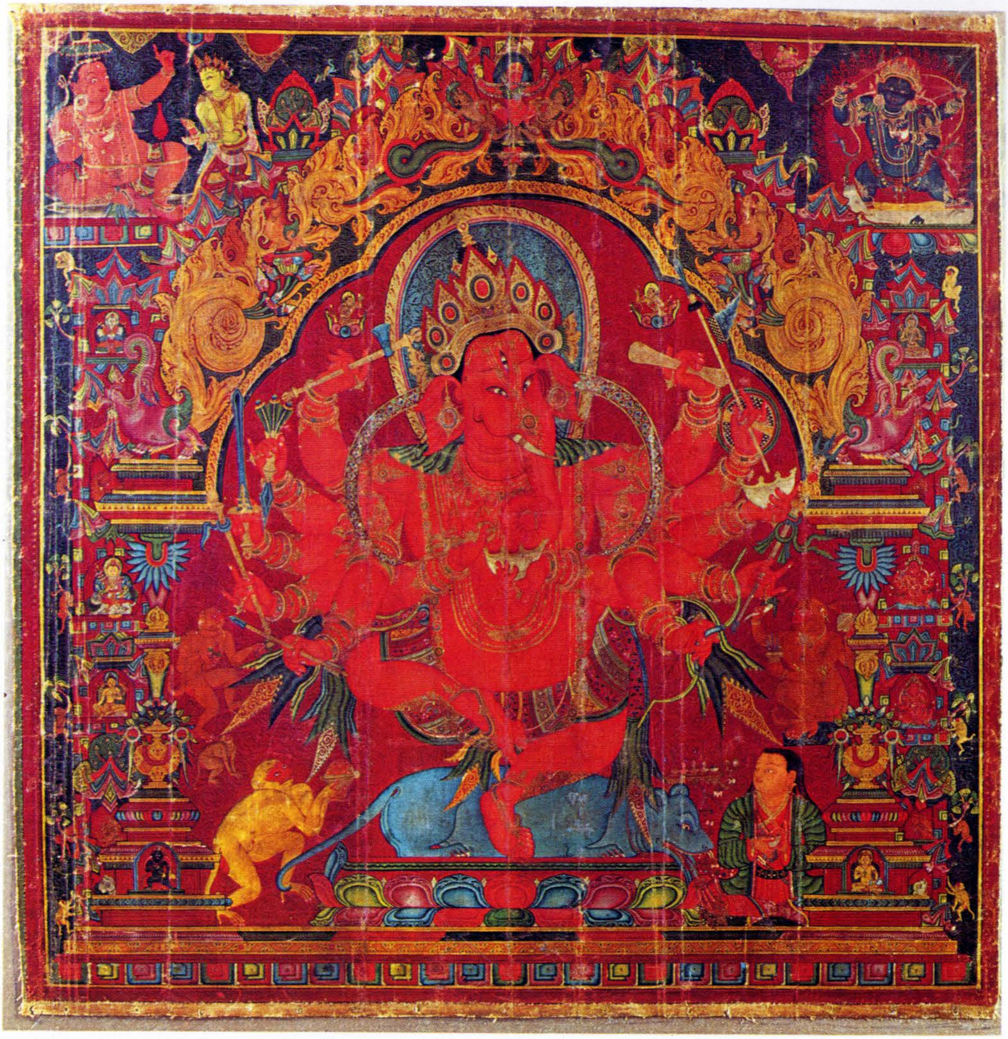
86. Detail of Fig. 85.



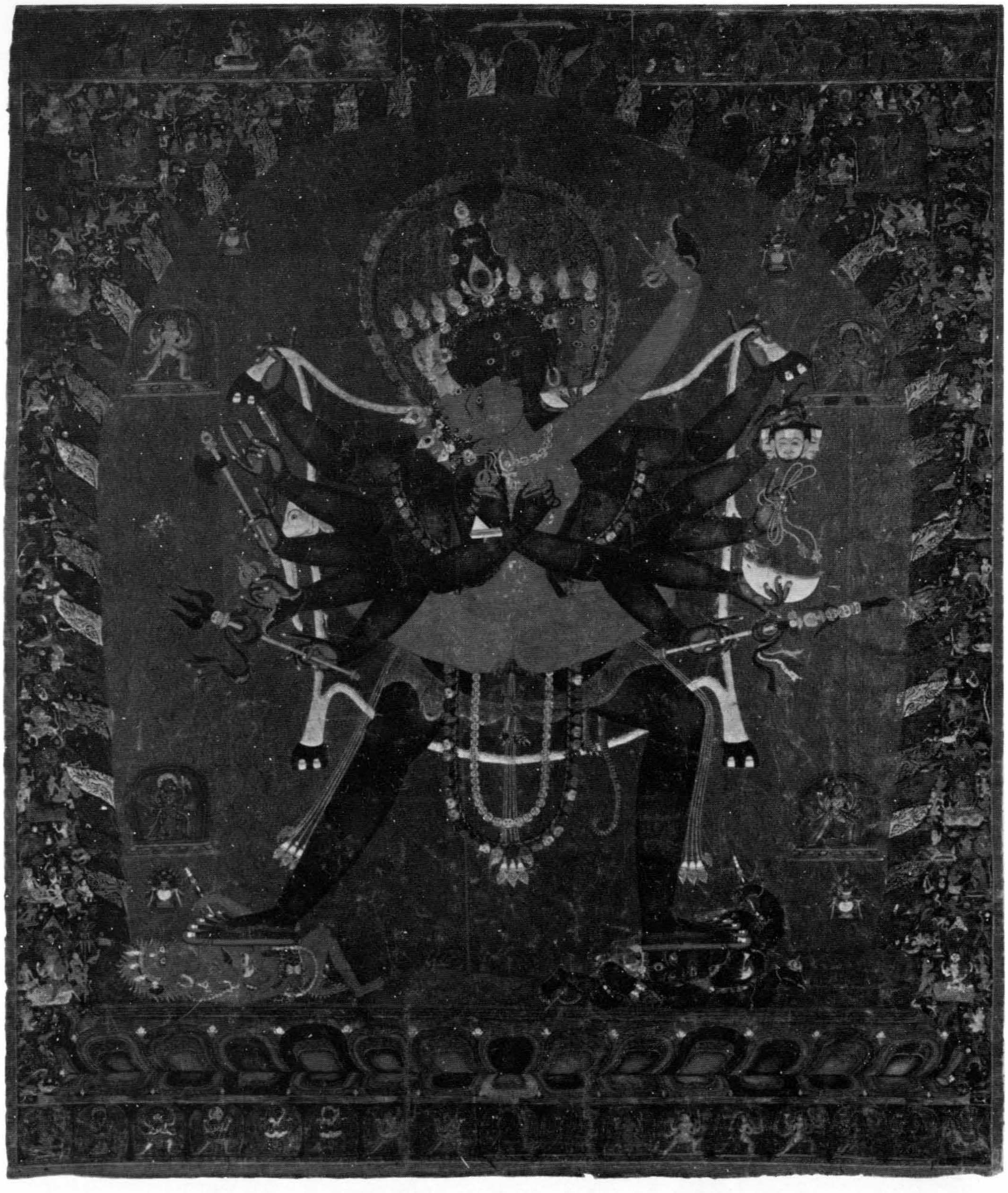
87. Agastaya and other sages, ca. 1450, H. 83 cm. Mr. and Mrs. John G. Ford Collection.



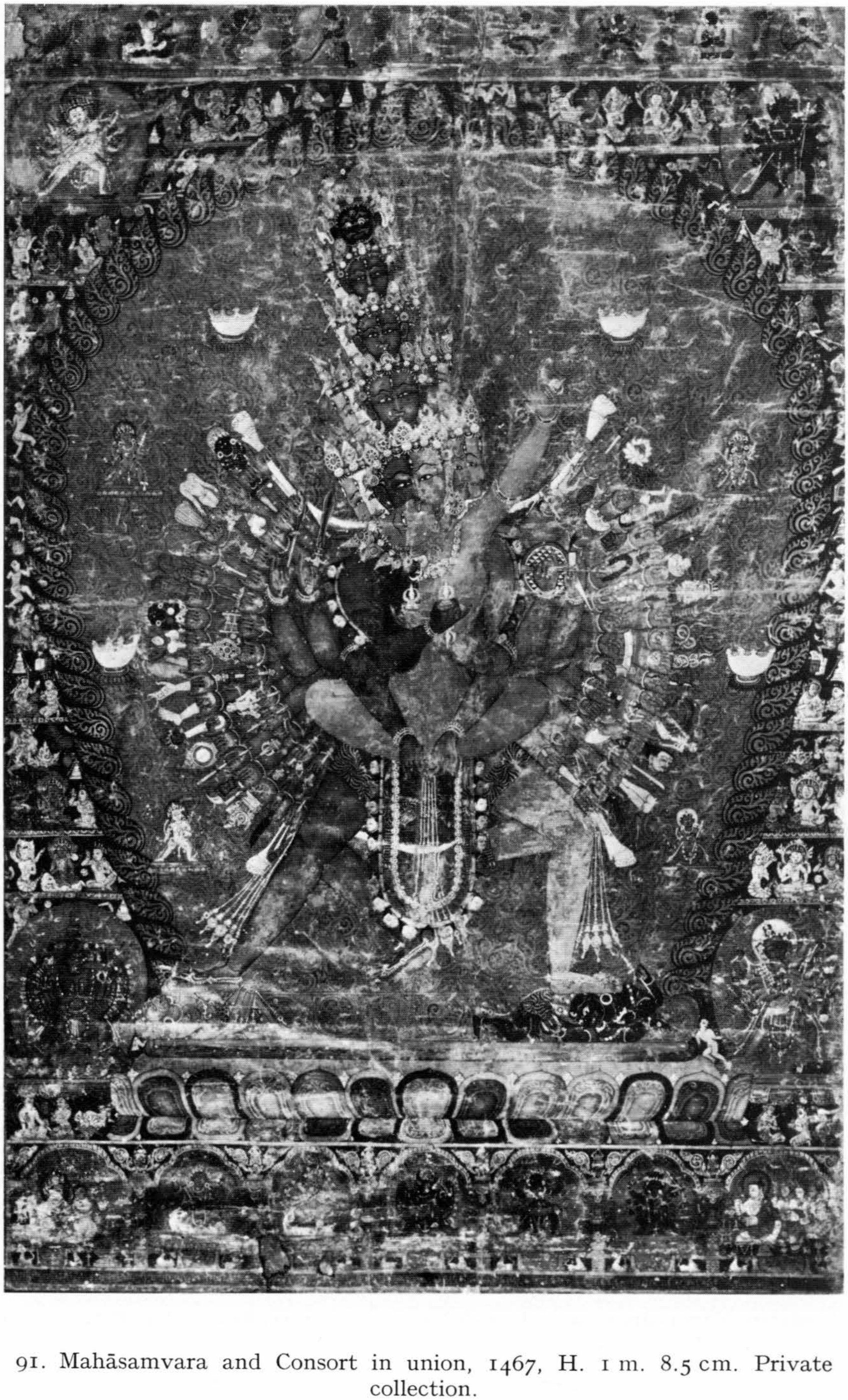
88. Detail of Fig. 87.



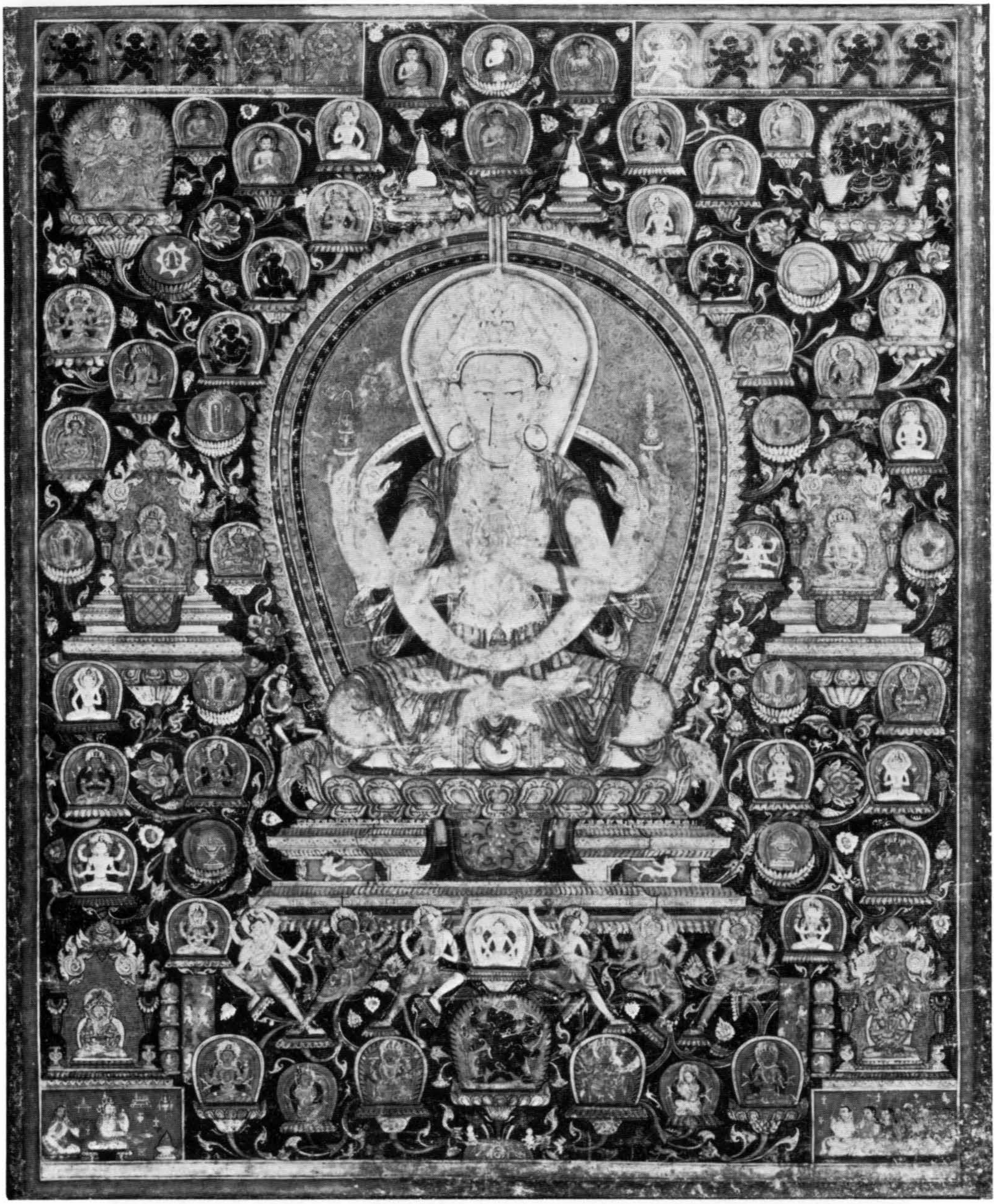
89. Dancing Mahāgaṇapati, ca. 1450, H. 68 cm. Doris Wiener Gallery.



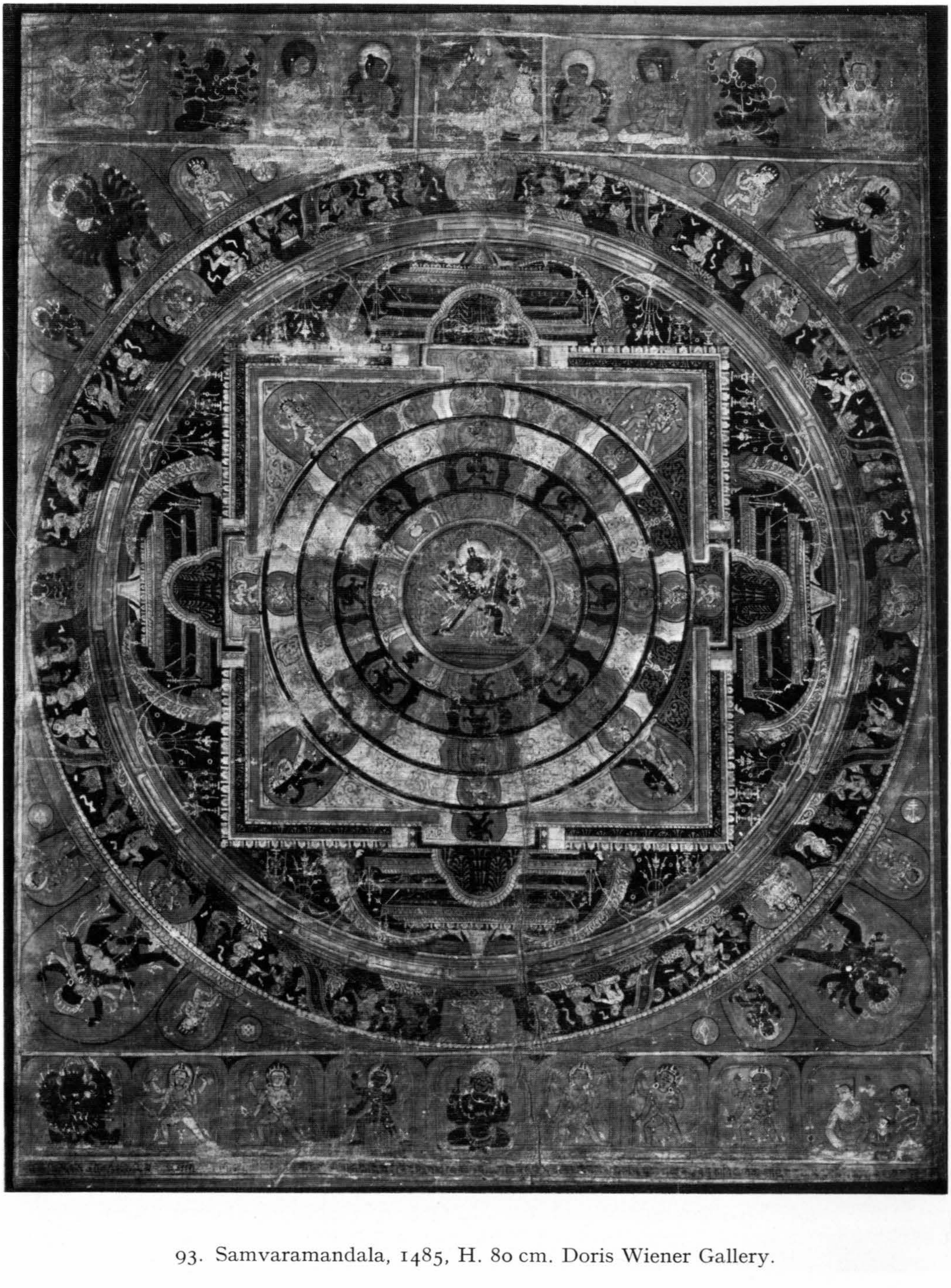
90. Samvara and consort in union, 1450-1500, H. 1.37 m. From the Nasli and Alice Heeramaneck Collection, Los Angeles County Museum of Art.



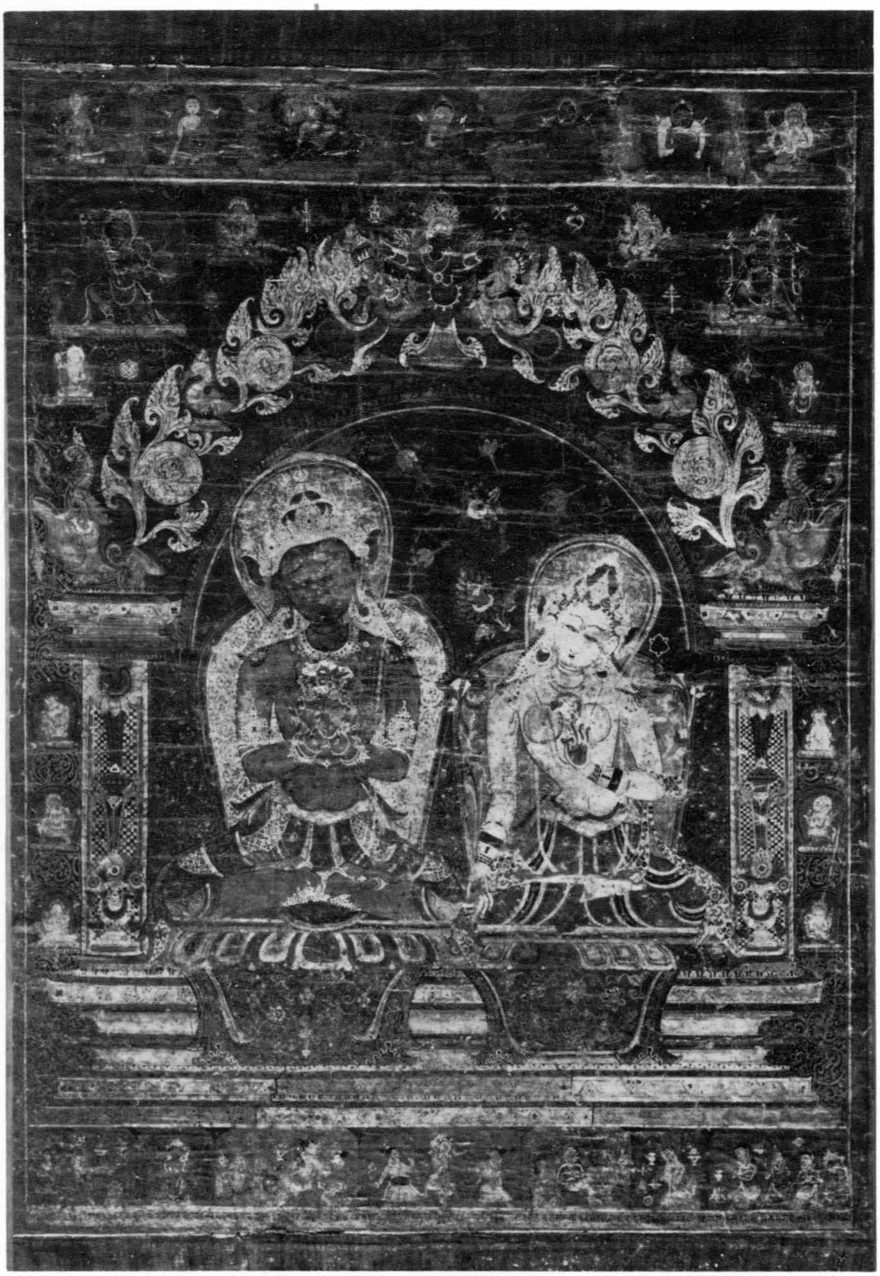
91. Mahāsamvara and Consort in union, 1467, H. 1 m. 8.5 cm. Private collection.



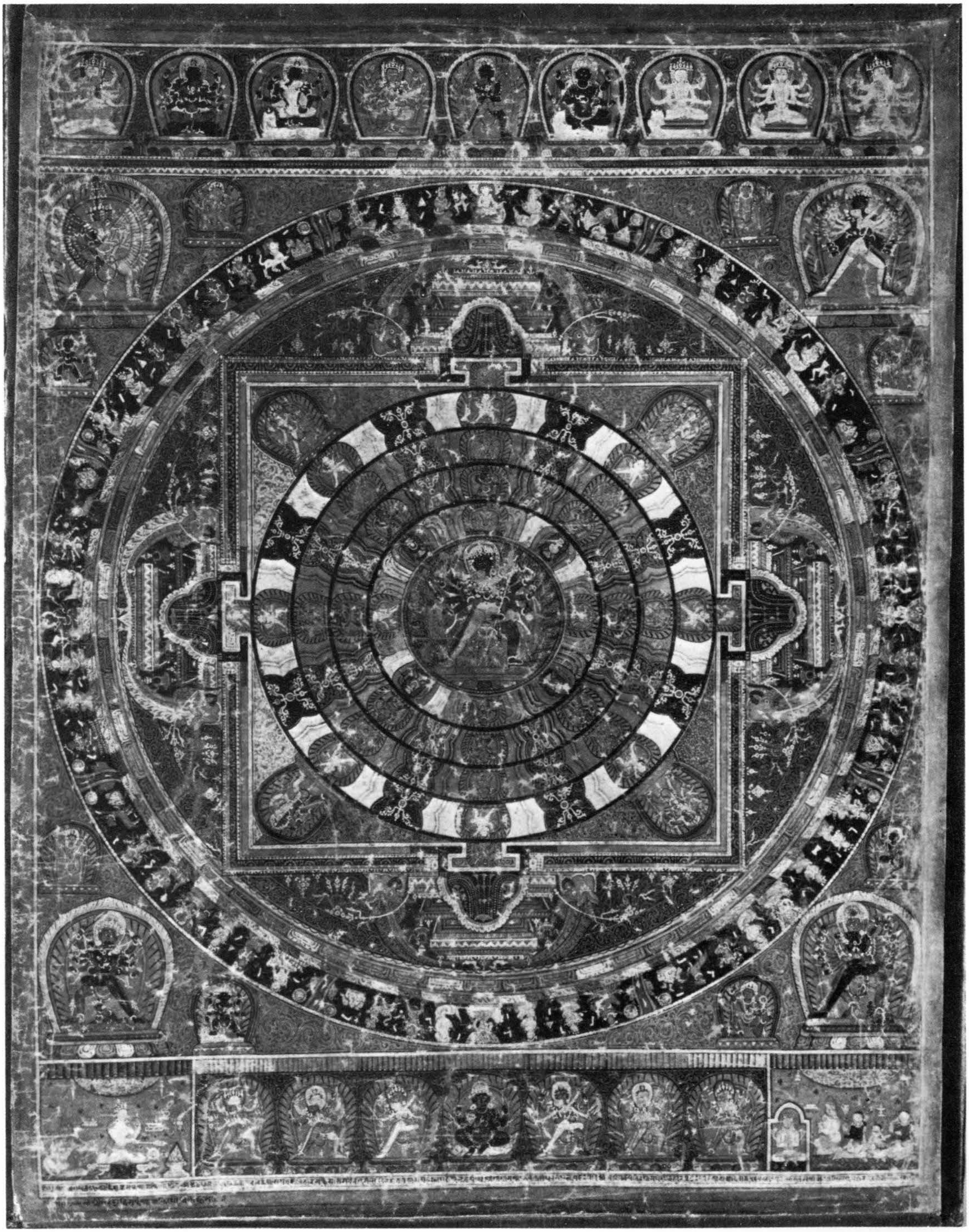
92. Bodhisattva Nāmasaṅgitī and other deities, ca. 1450, H. 85 cm. The British Museum.



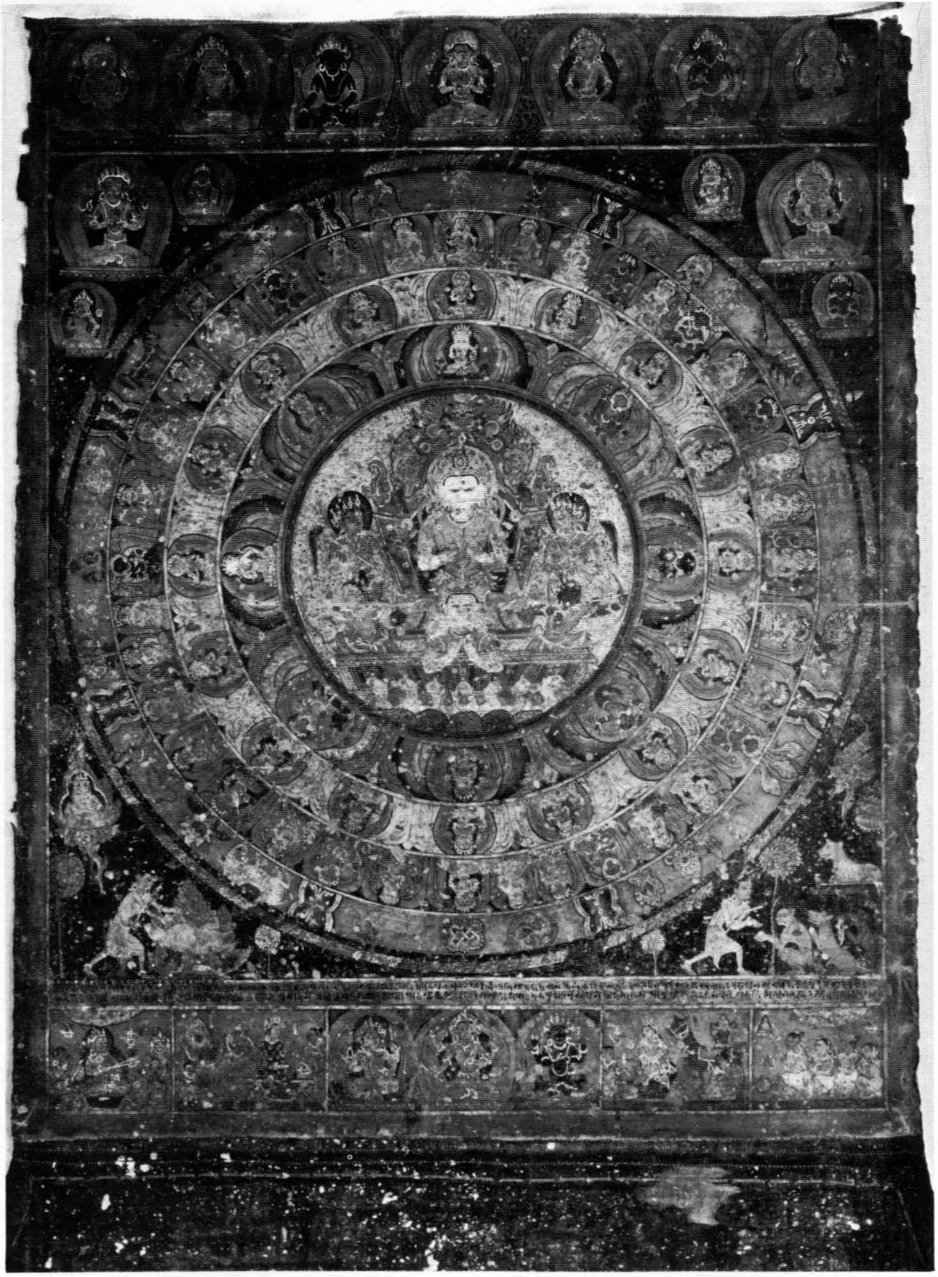
93. Samvaramandala, 1485, H. 80 cm. Doris Wiener Gallery.



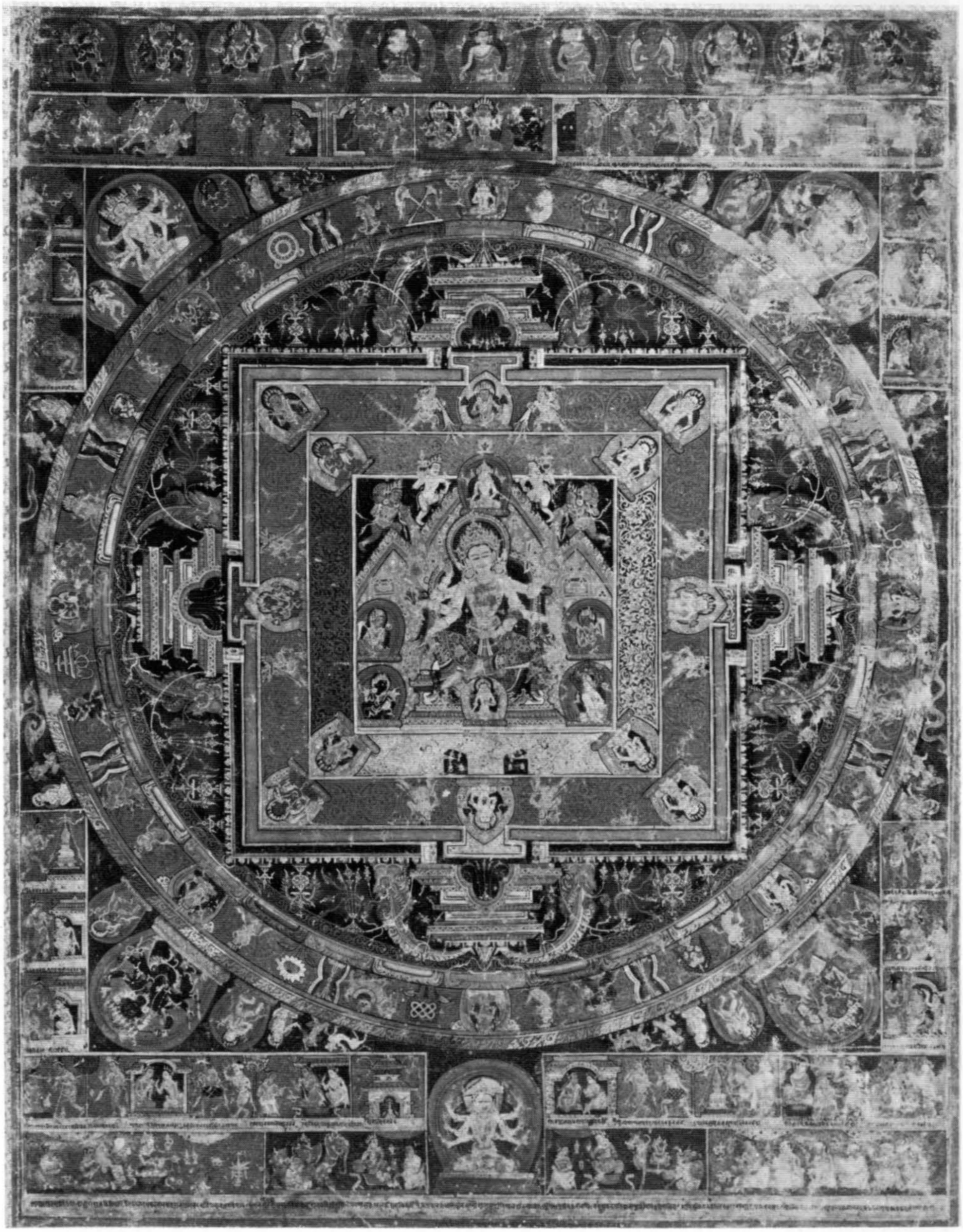
94. Vajradhara and Vajradhātīśvarī, 1488, H. 1 m. Musée Guimet, Paris.



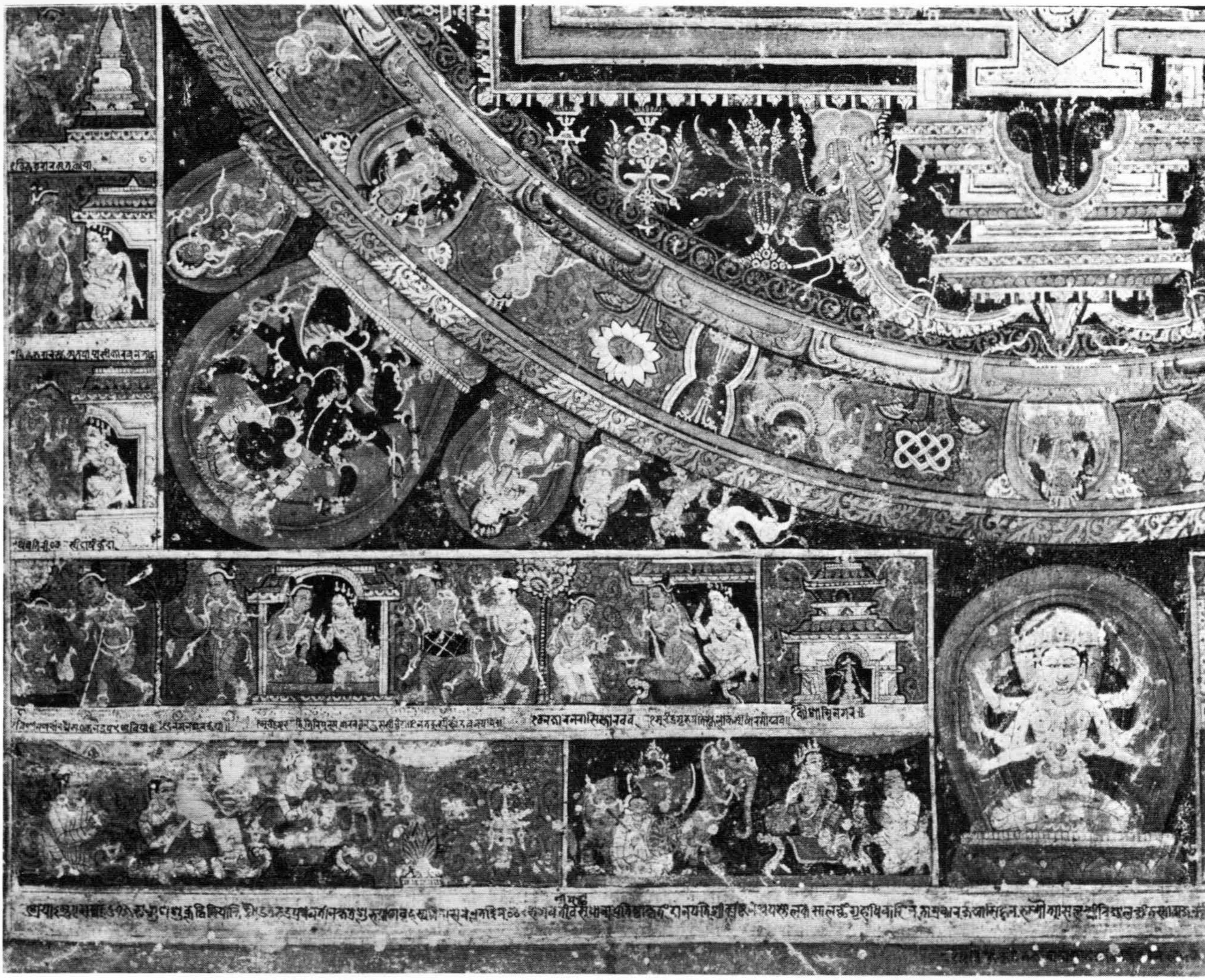
95. Samvaramandala, 1490, H. 1 m. 16.8 cm. Los Angeles County Museum of Art.



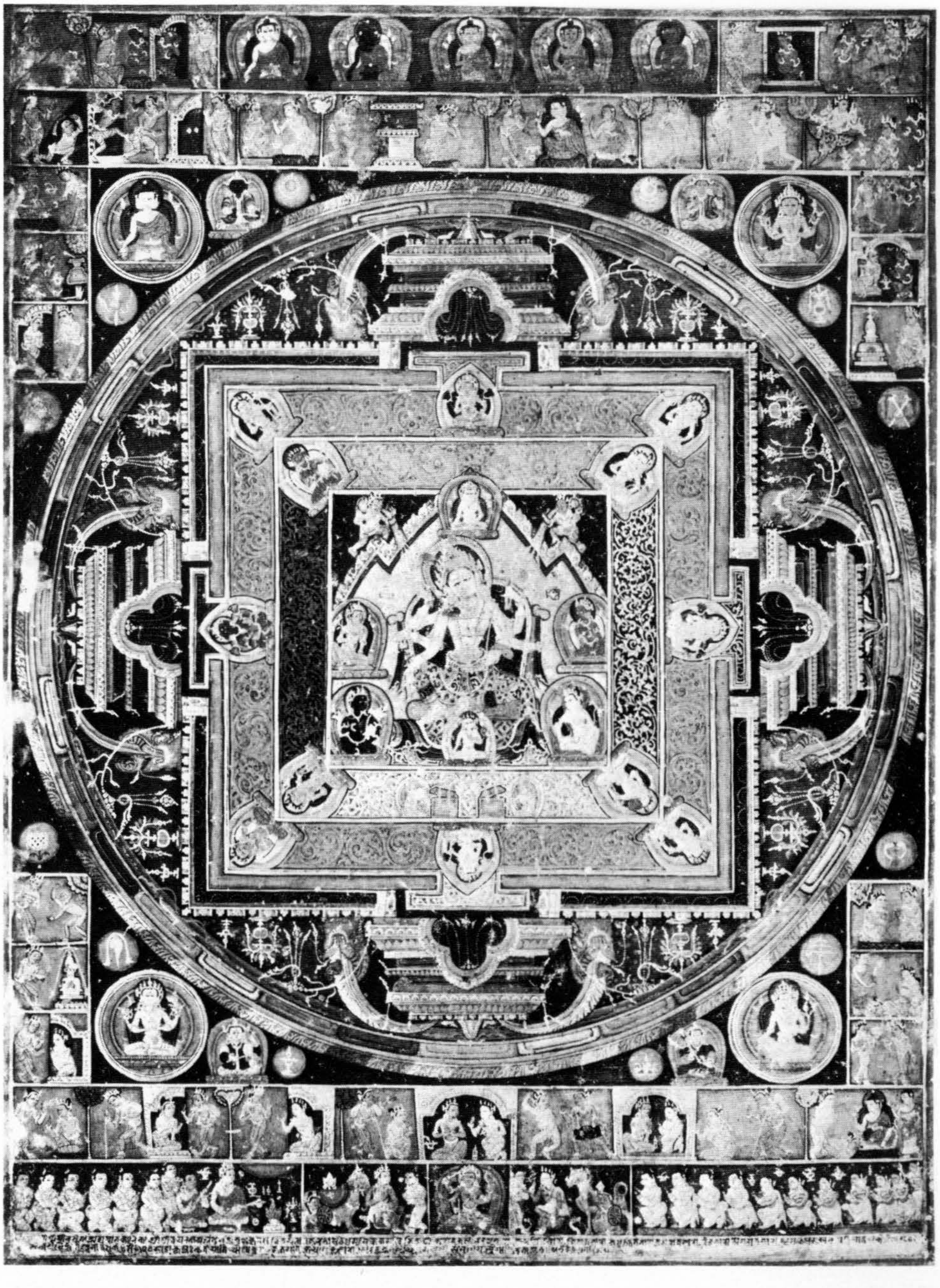
96. Candramandala, 1495, H. 74.5 cm. Museum van Aziatische Kunst, Amsterdam.



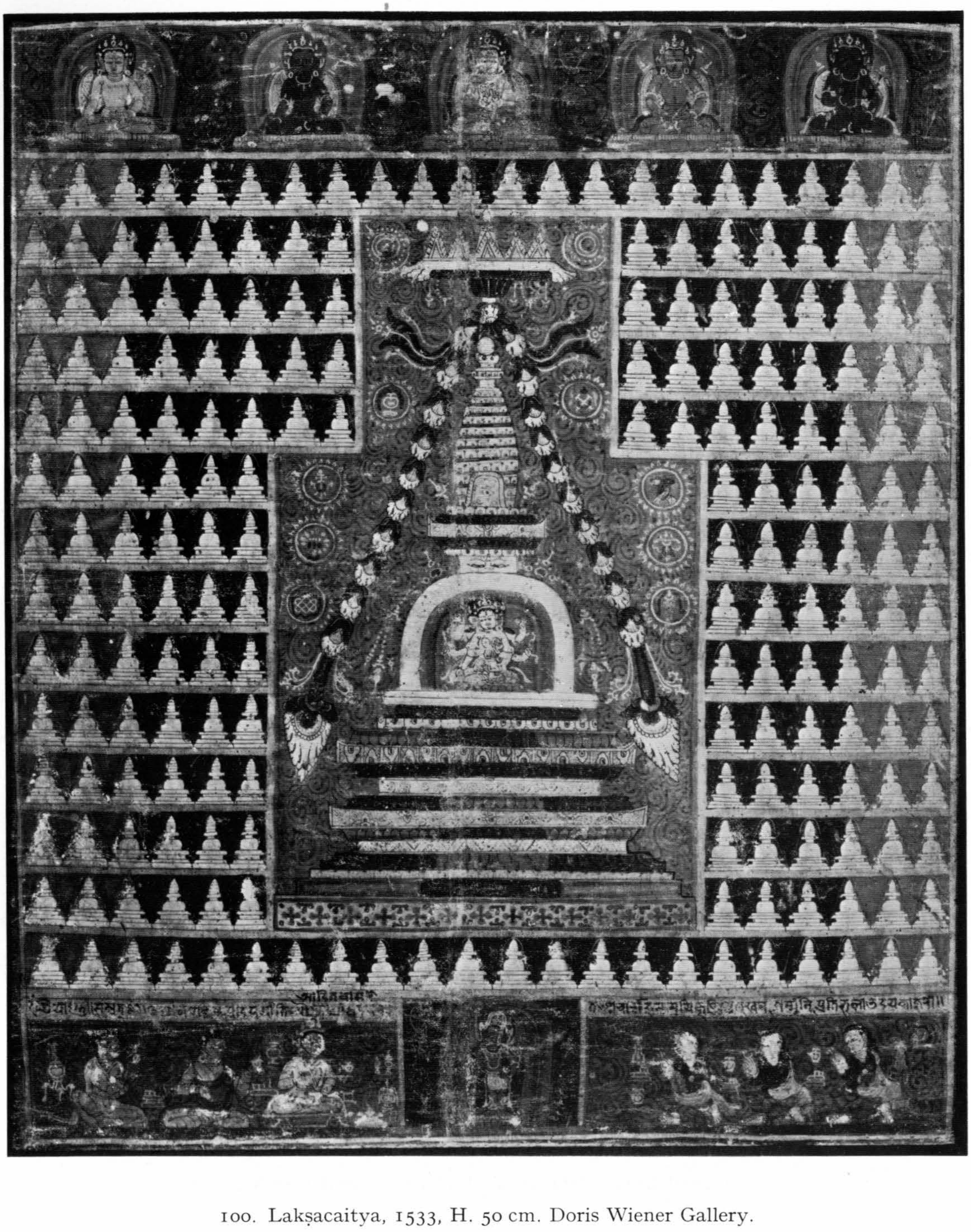
97. Vasudhārāmandala, ca. 1495, H. 1 m. 10.5 cm. From the Nasli and Alice Heeramaneck Collection, Los Angeles County Museum of Art.



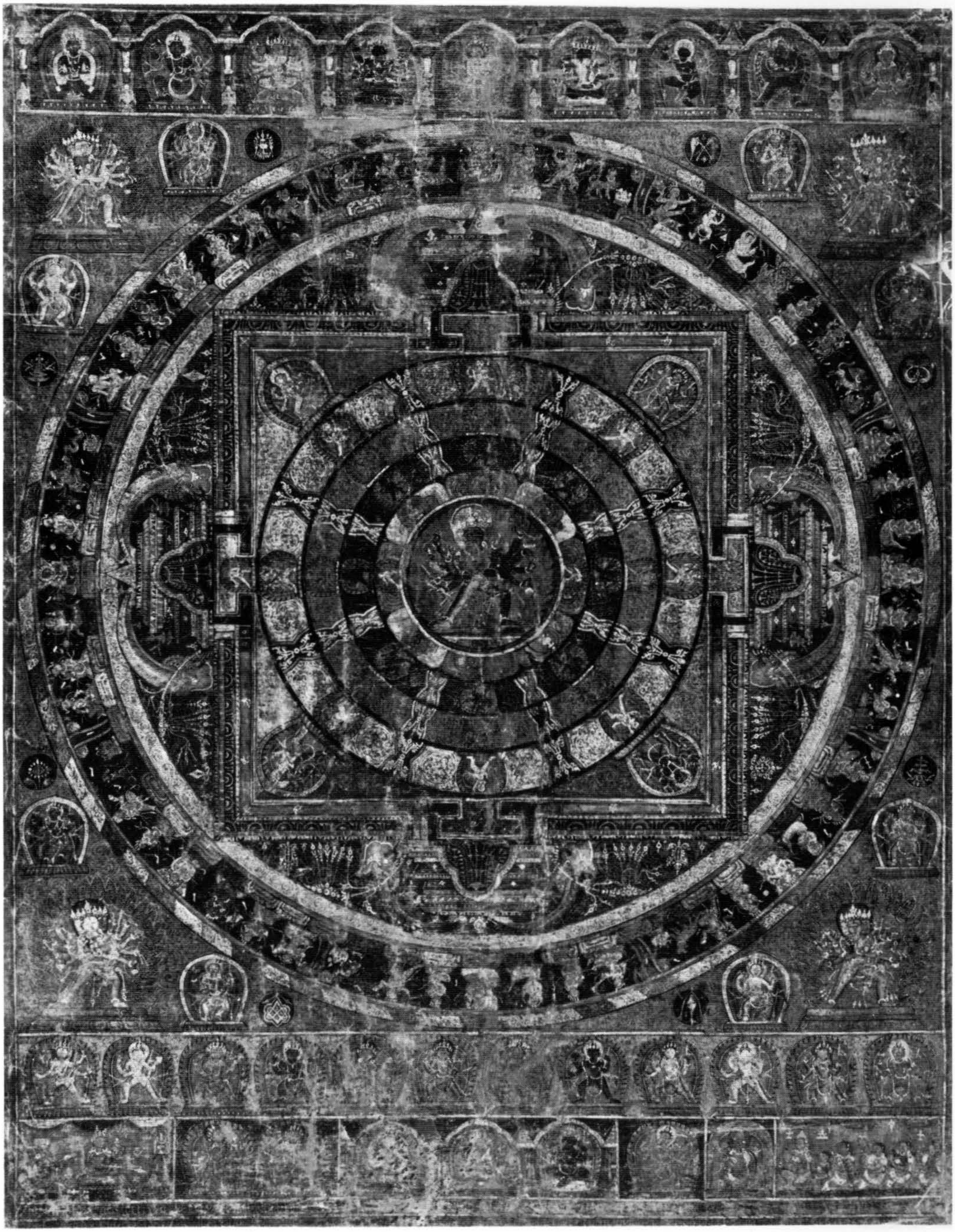
98. Detail of Fig. 97.



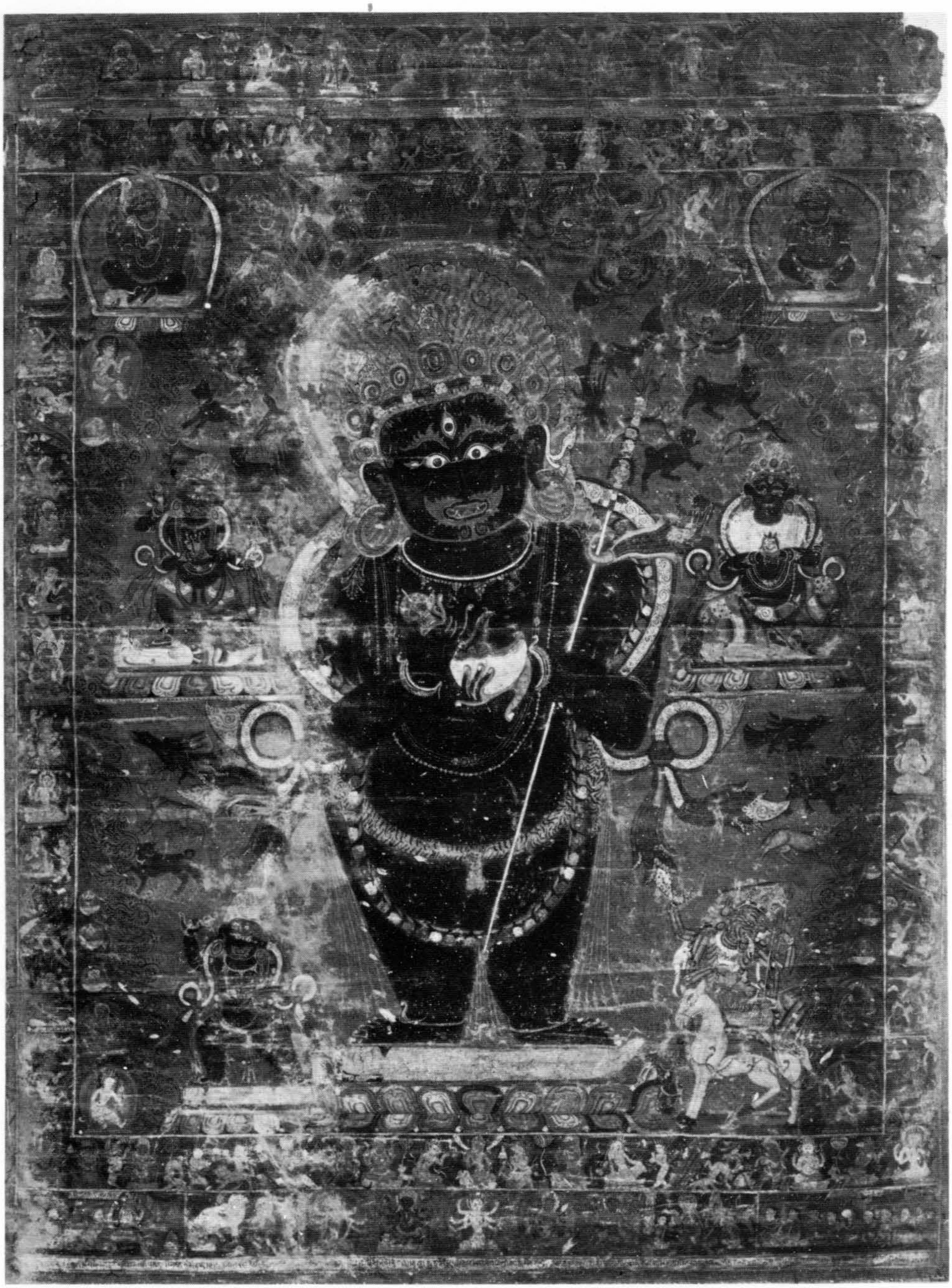
99. Vasudhārāmandala, 1504, H. 88 cm., The British Museum.



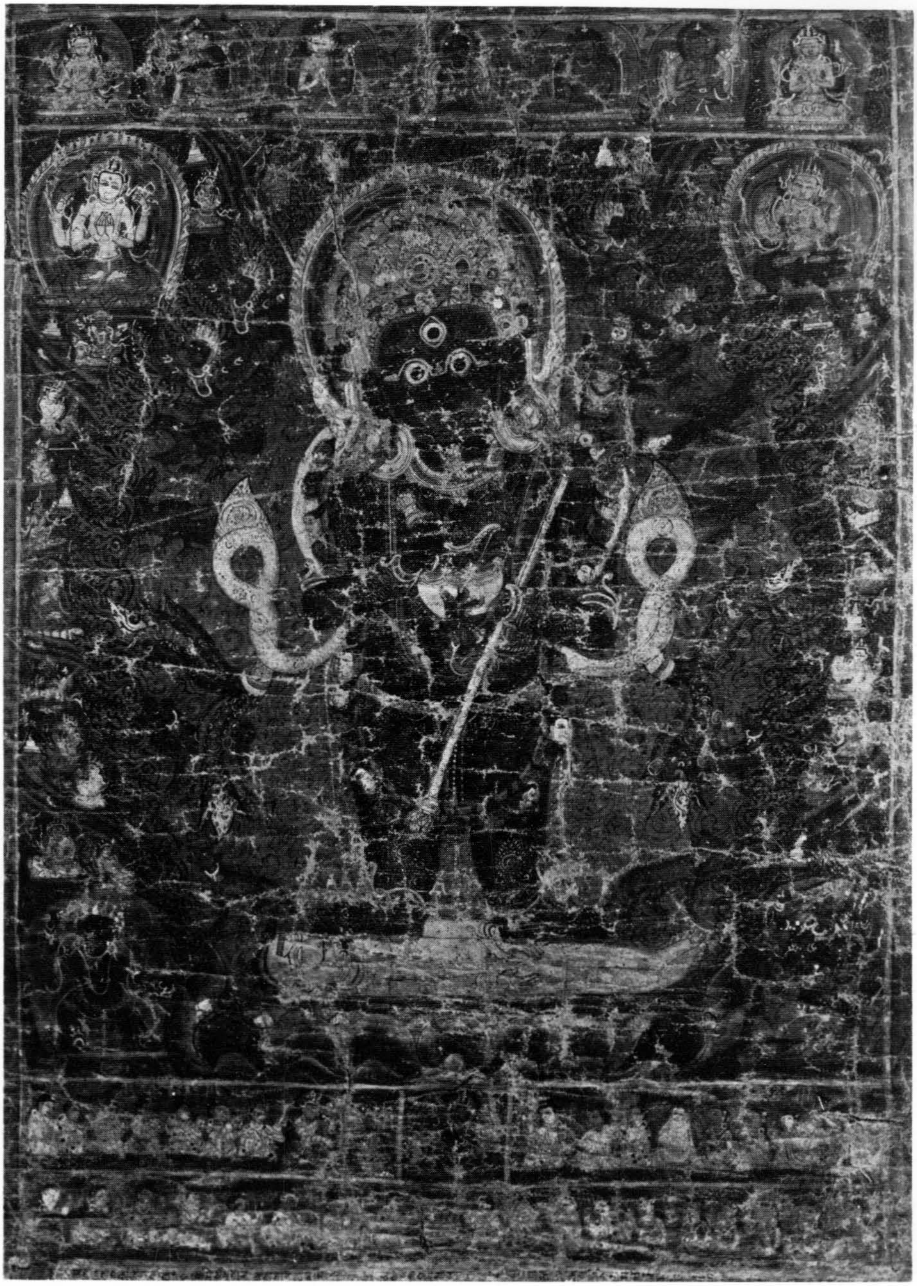
100. Lakṣacaitya, 1533, H. 50 cm. Doris Wiener Gallery.



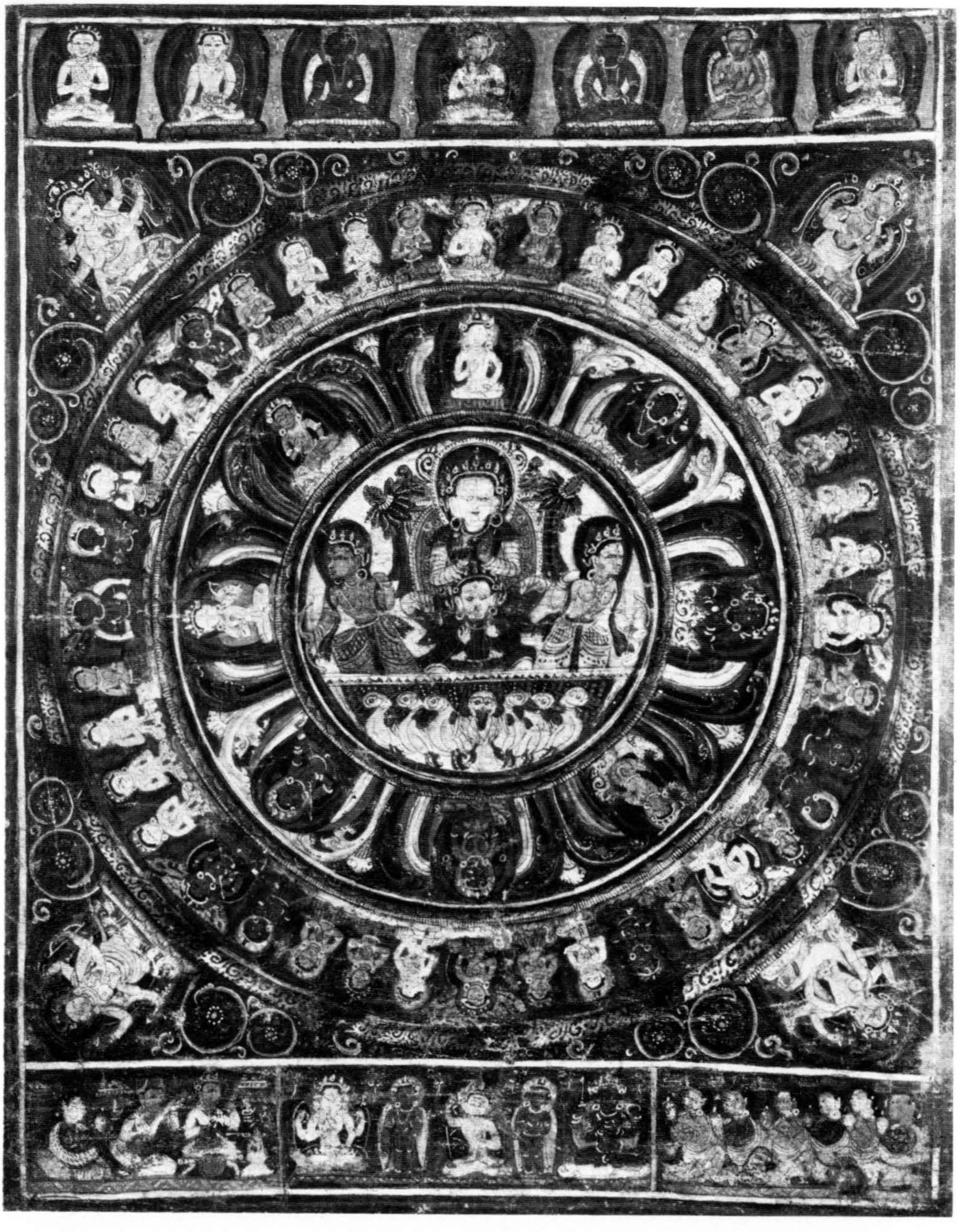
101. Samvaramandala, 1534, H. 97.2 cm. Newark Museum Mary Livingstone Griggs and Mary Griggs Burke Foundation Fund.



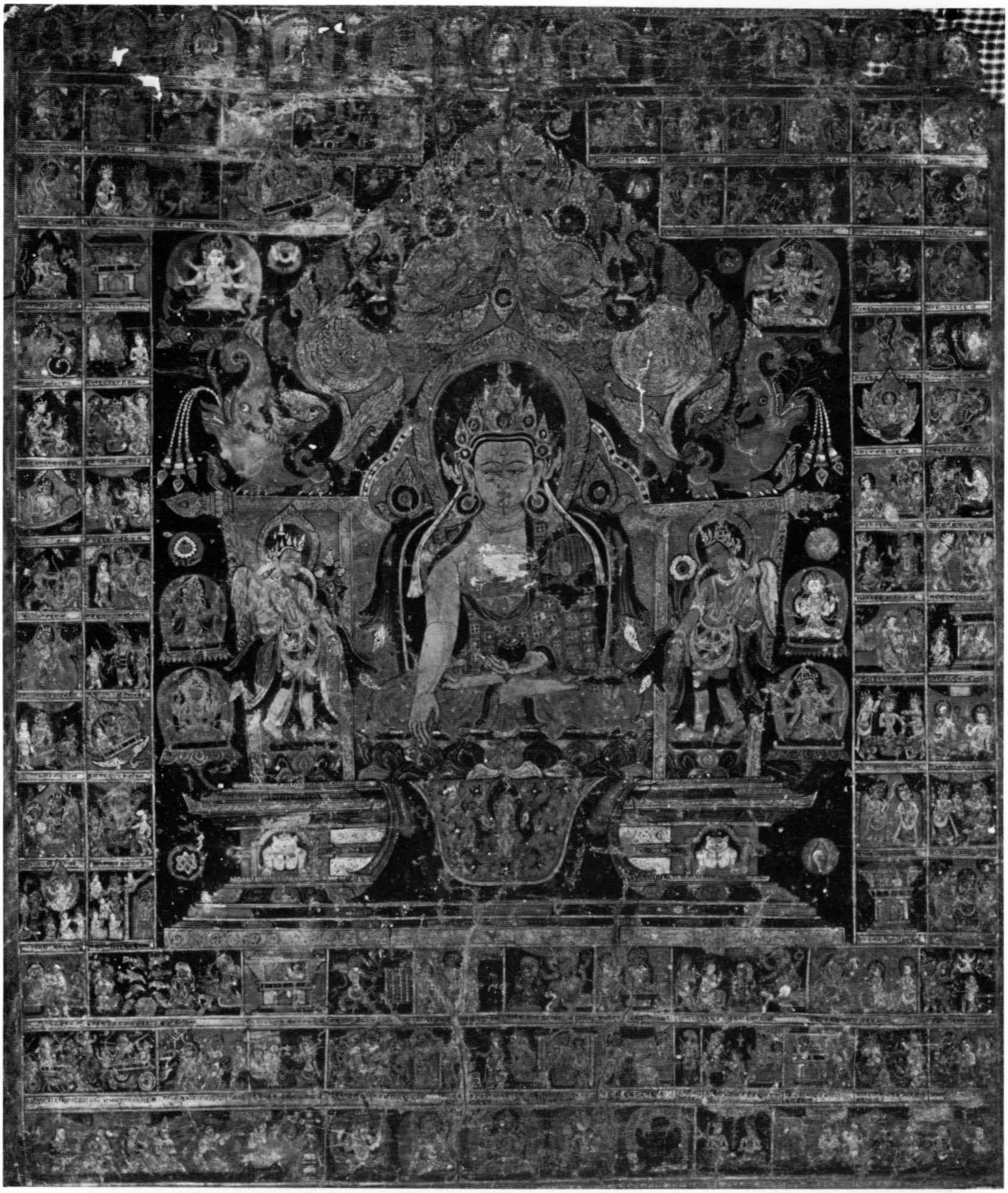
102. Mahākāla, 1543, H. 116.5 cm. Pan-Asian Collection.



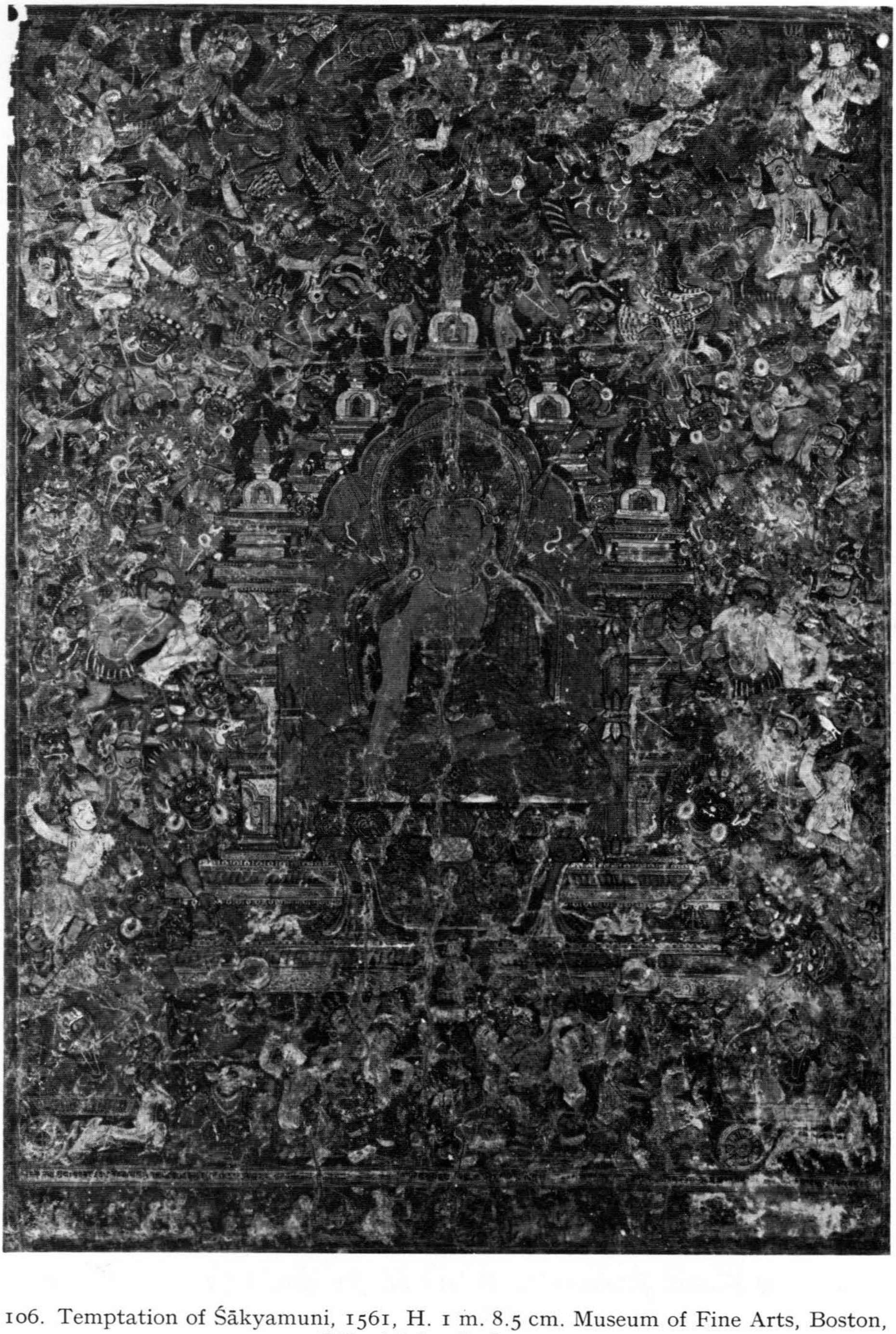
103. Mahākāla, 1577, H. 49.5 cm. Pan-Asian Collection.



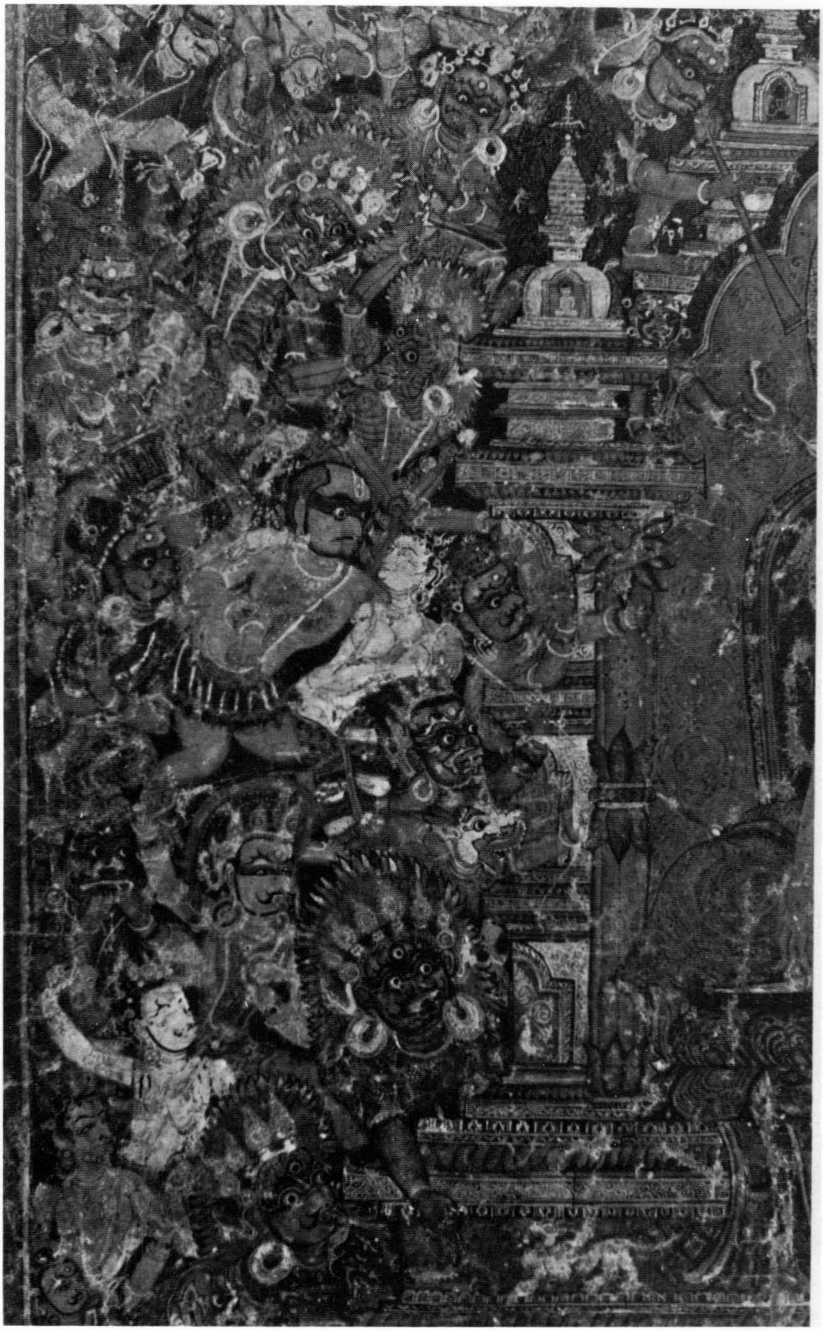
104. Candramandala, ca. 1550, H. 59.7 cm. Zimmerman Collection.



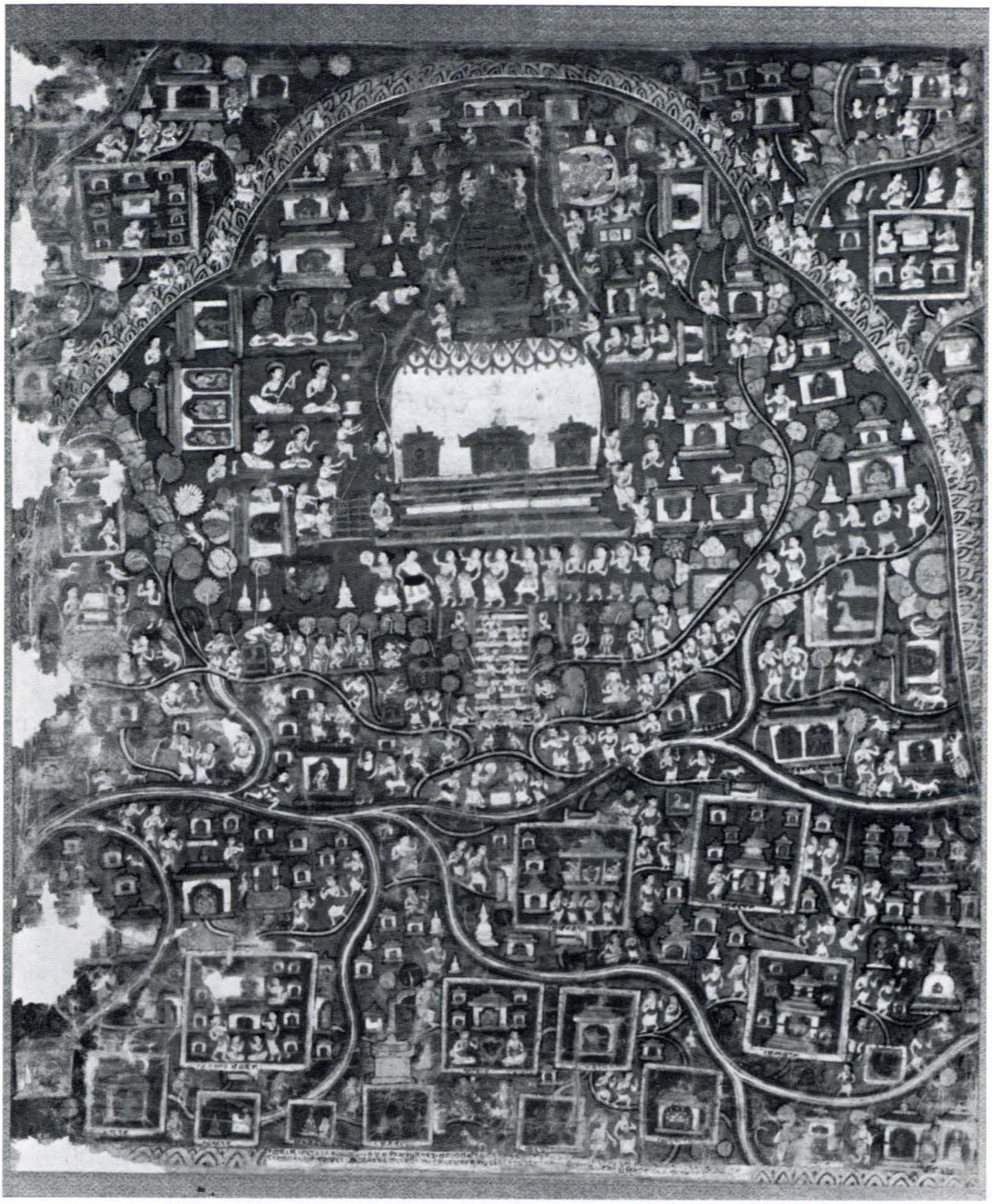
105. Śākyamuni and Kinnarī Jātaka, 1552, H. 95.6 cm. Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, Gift of John Goelet.



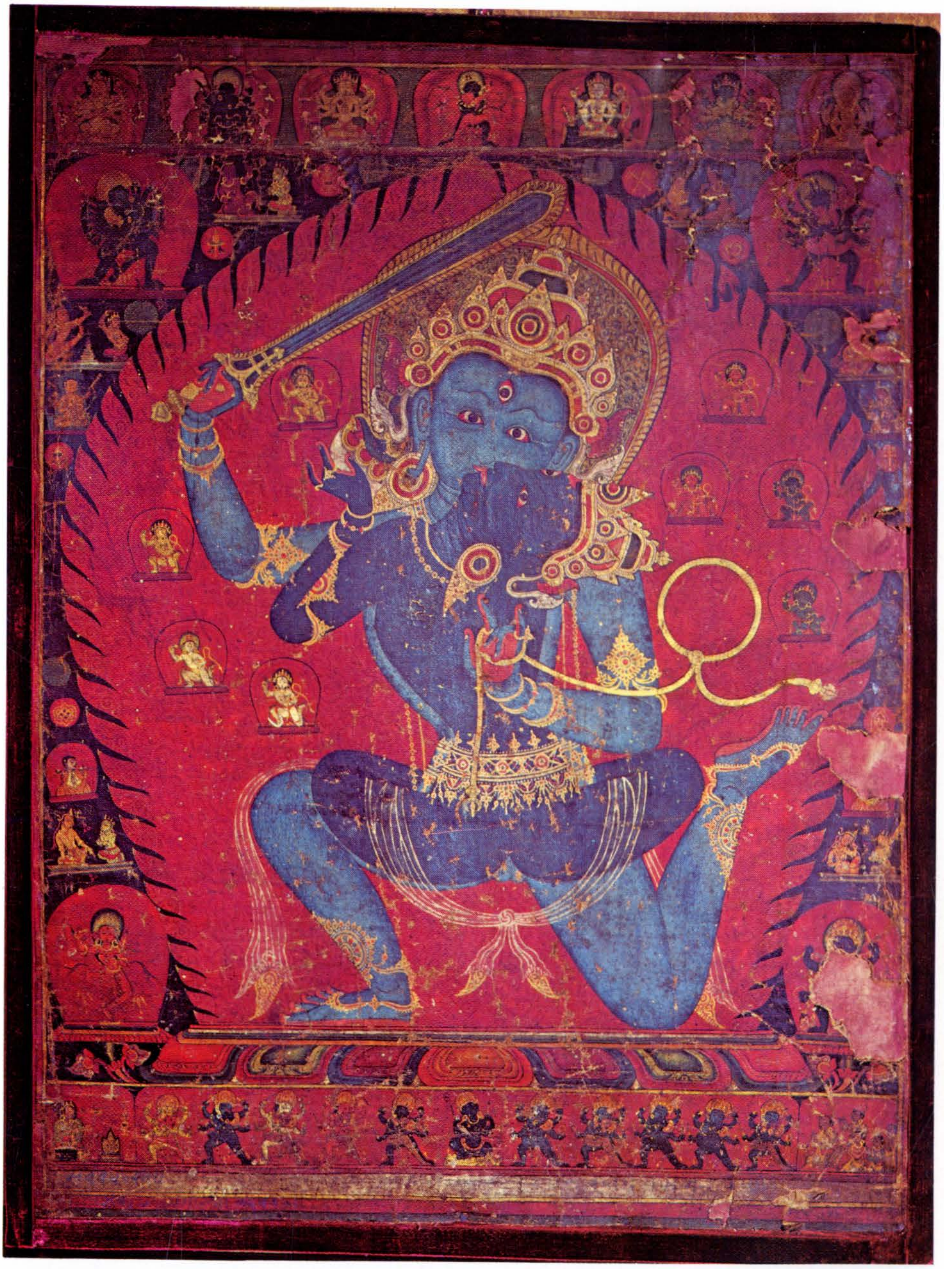
106. Temptation of Śākyamuni, 1561, H. 1 m. 8.5 cm. Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, Gift of John Goelet.



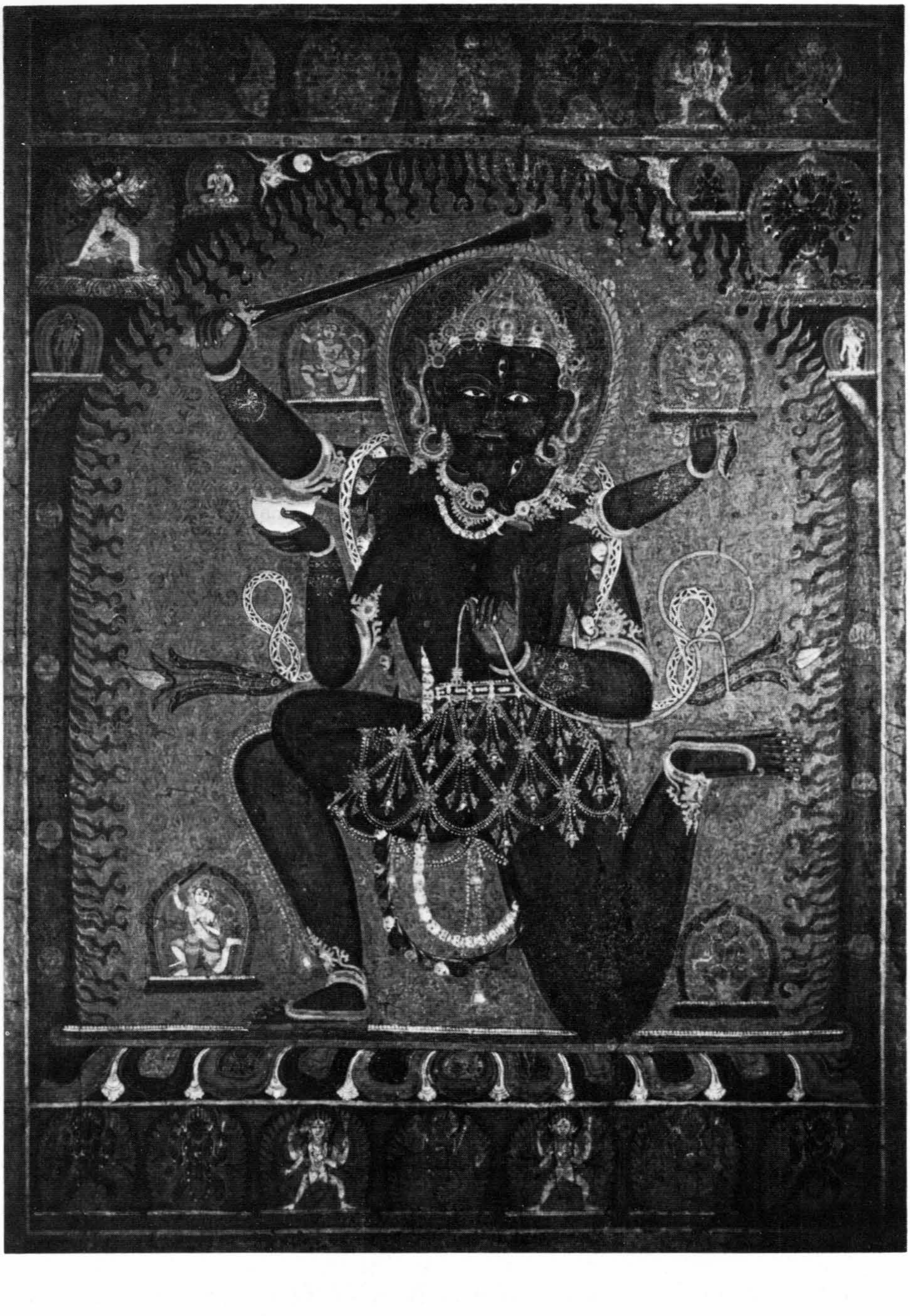
107. Detail of Fig. 106.



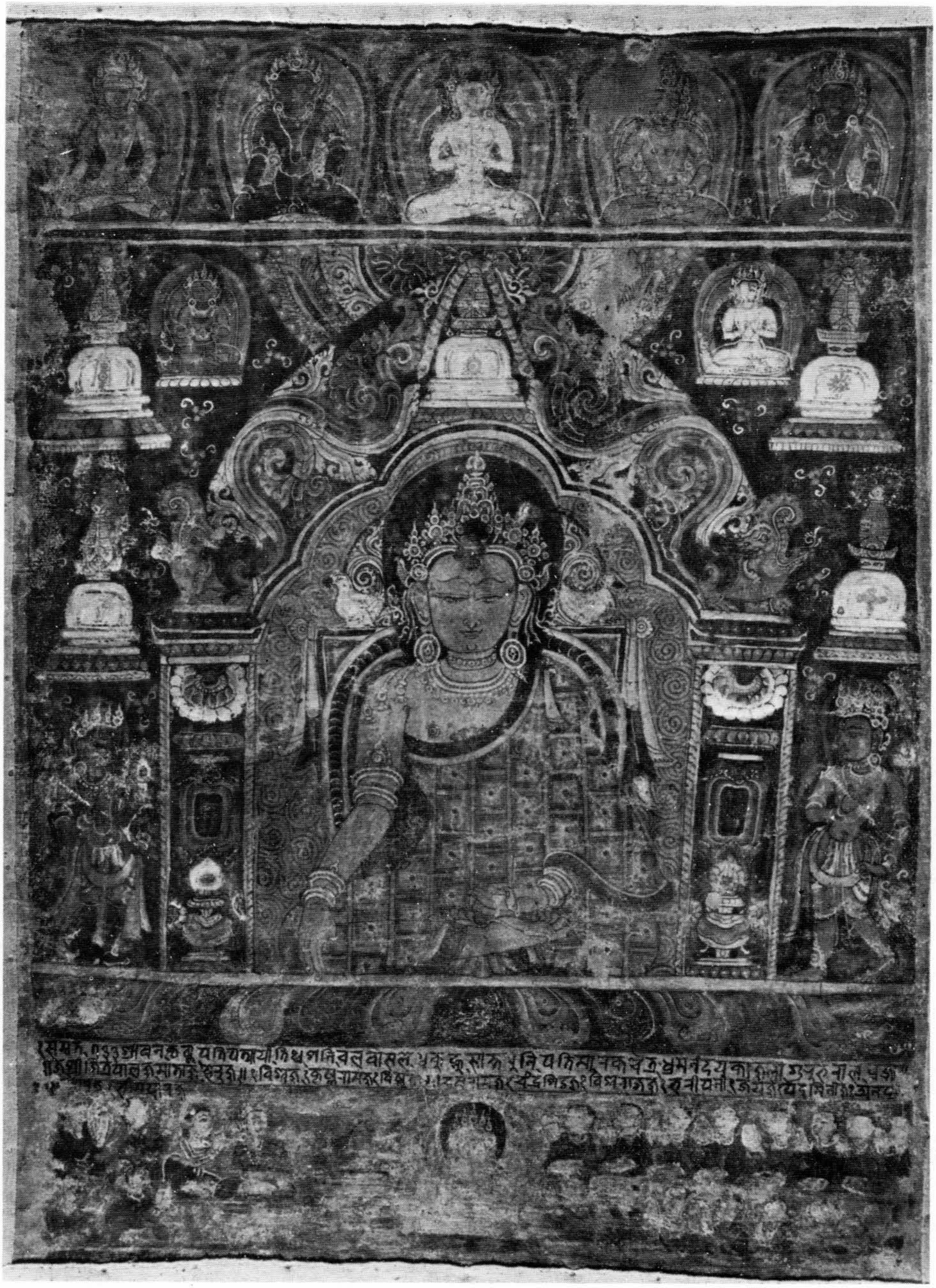
108. Restoration of Svayambhūnātha, 1565, H. 1.3 m., Private Collection.



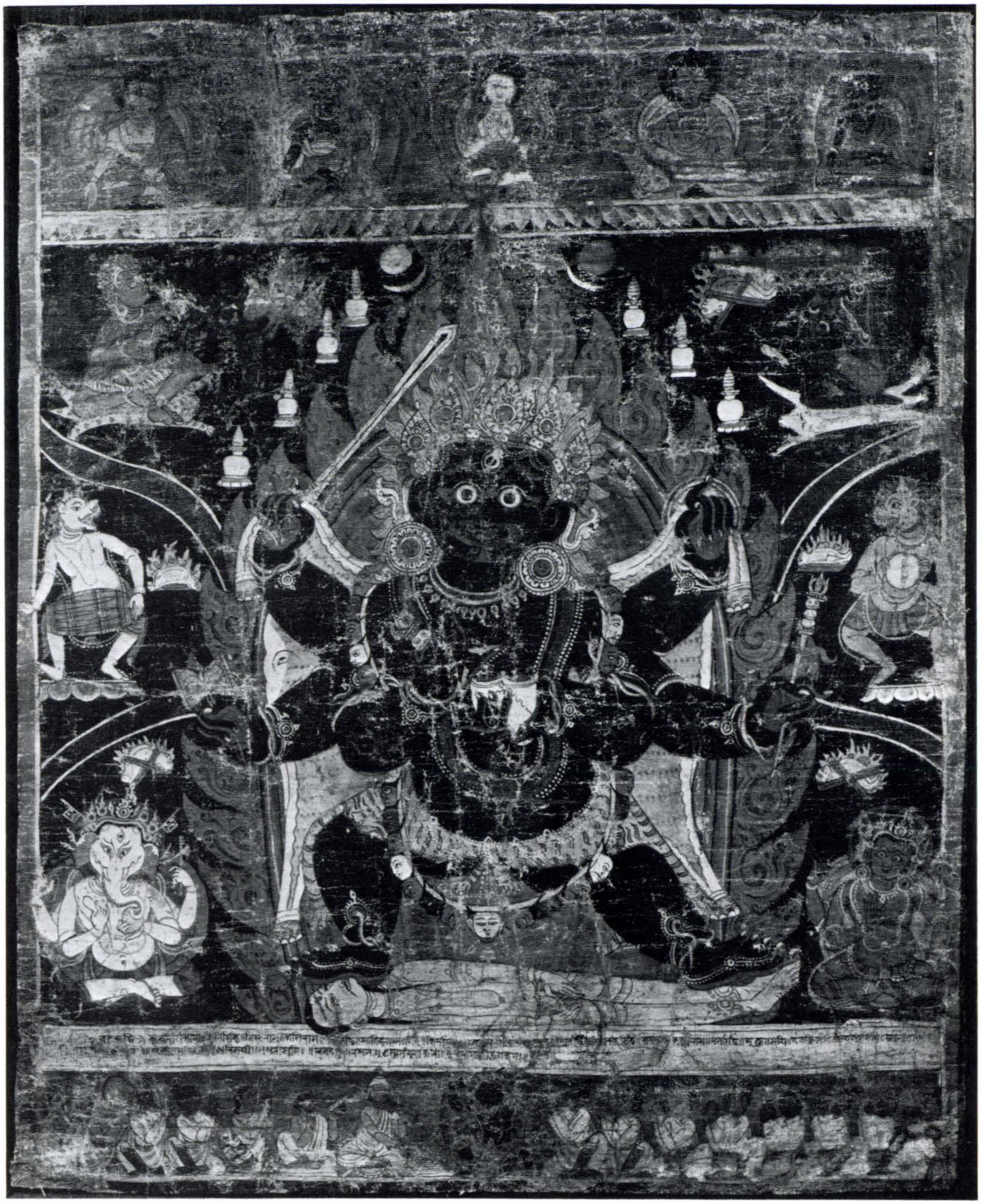
109. Acala Caṇḍamahāroṣaṇa and consort in union, ca. 1575, H. 86.3 cm. Zimmerman Collection.



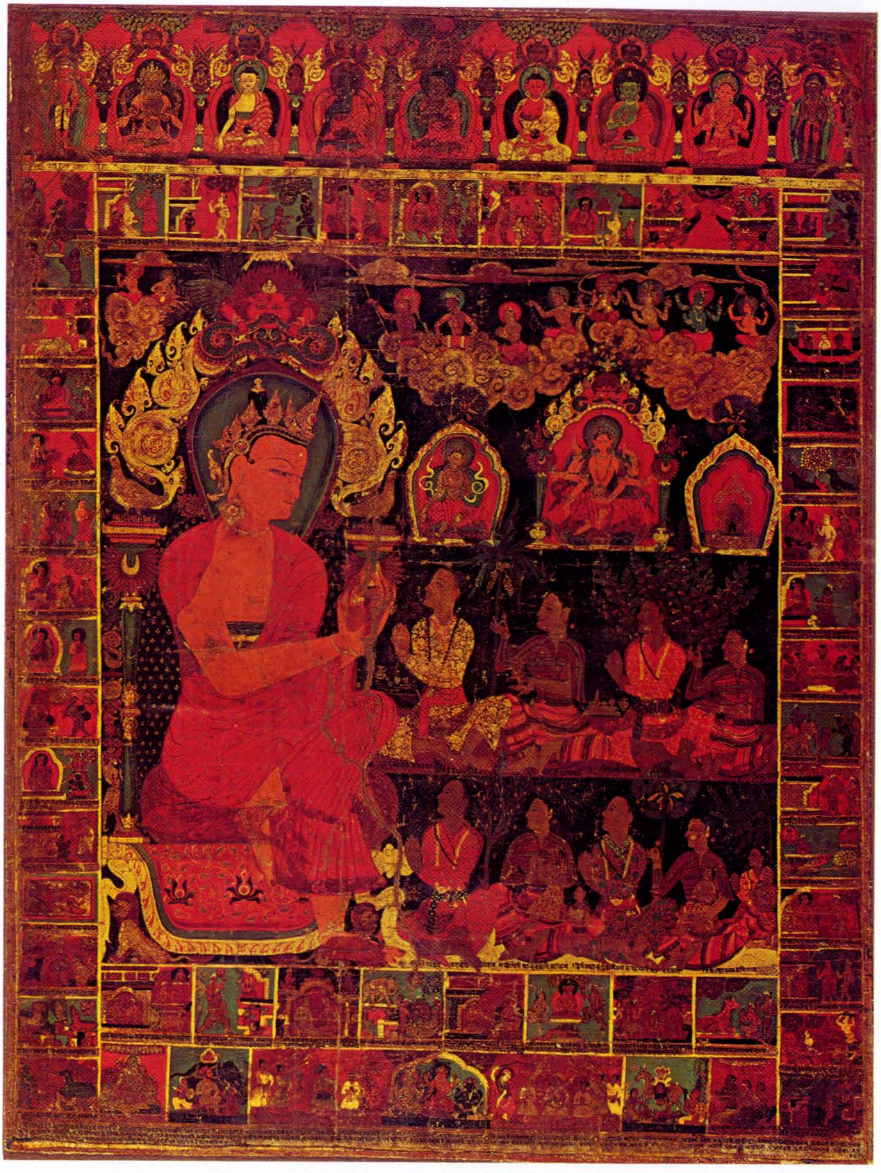
110. Acala Caṇḍamahārosaṇa and consort in union, 1600-1625, H. 82 cm. Mr. and Mrs. John G. Ford Collection.



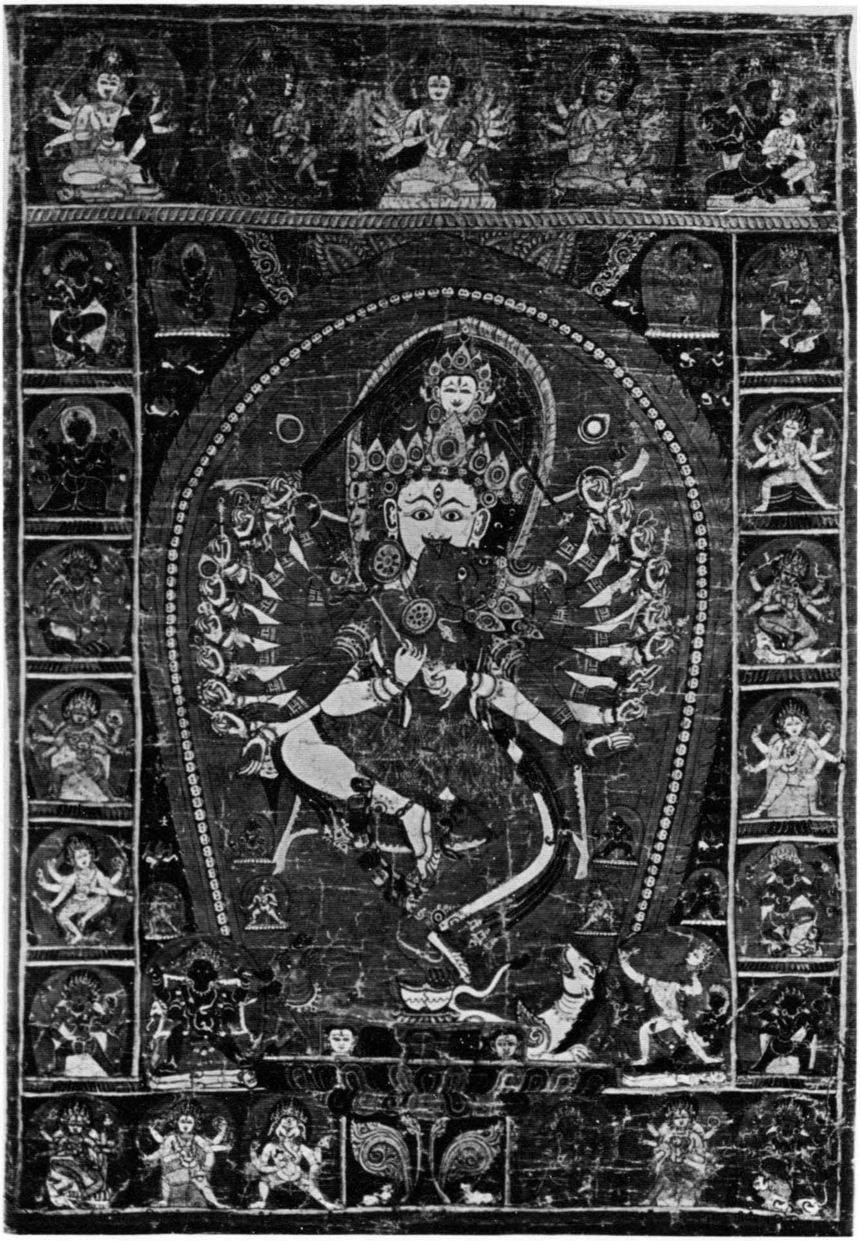
111. Enshrined Śākyamuni, 1613, H. 69.5 cm. Museum für Indische Kunst, Berlin.



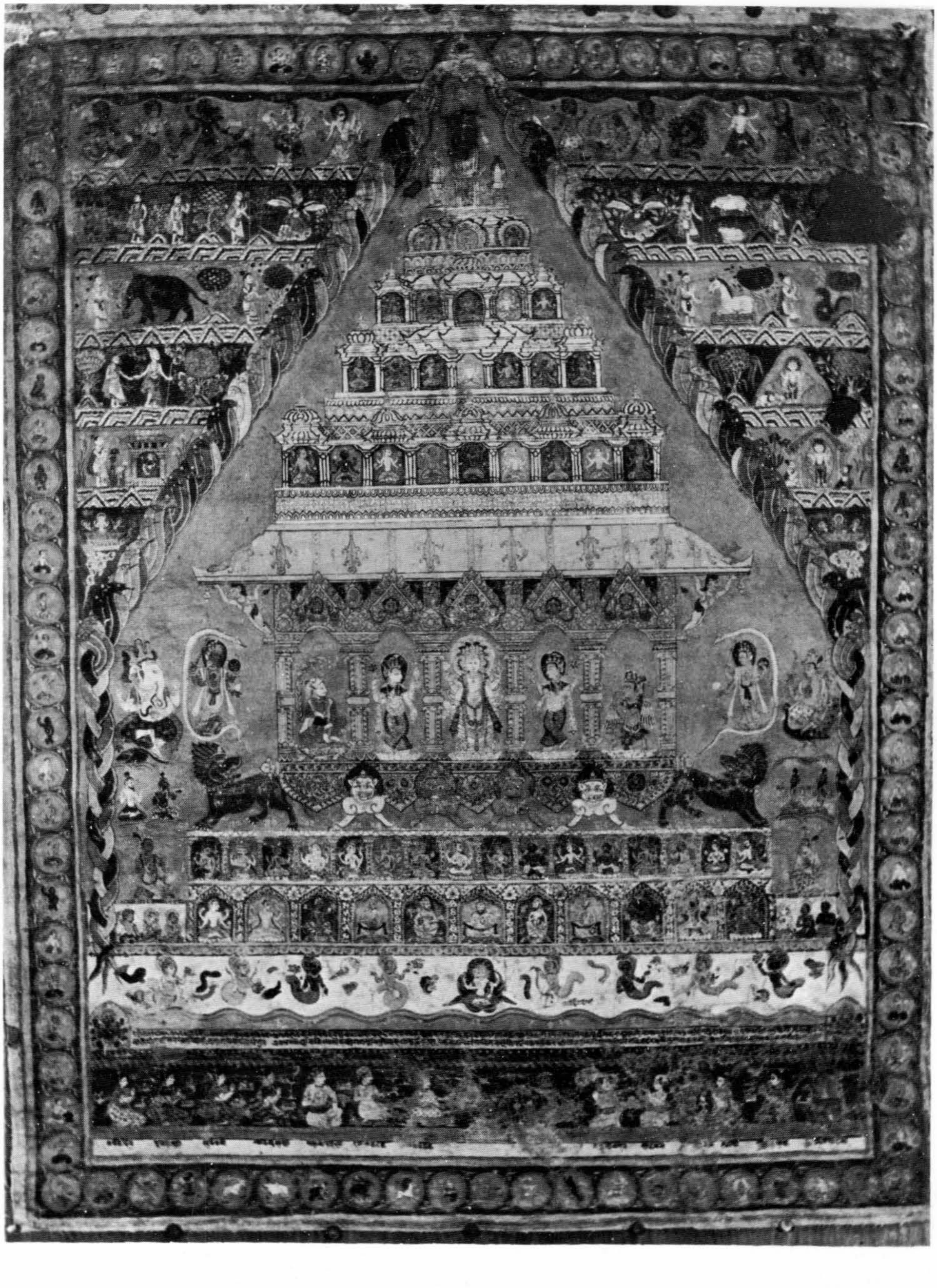
112. Mahākāla, ca. 1650, H. 66 cm. Doris Wiener Gallery.



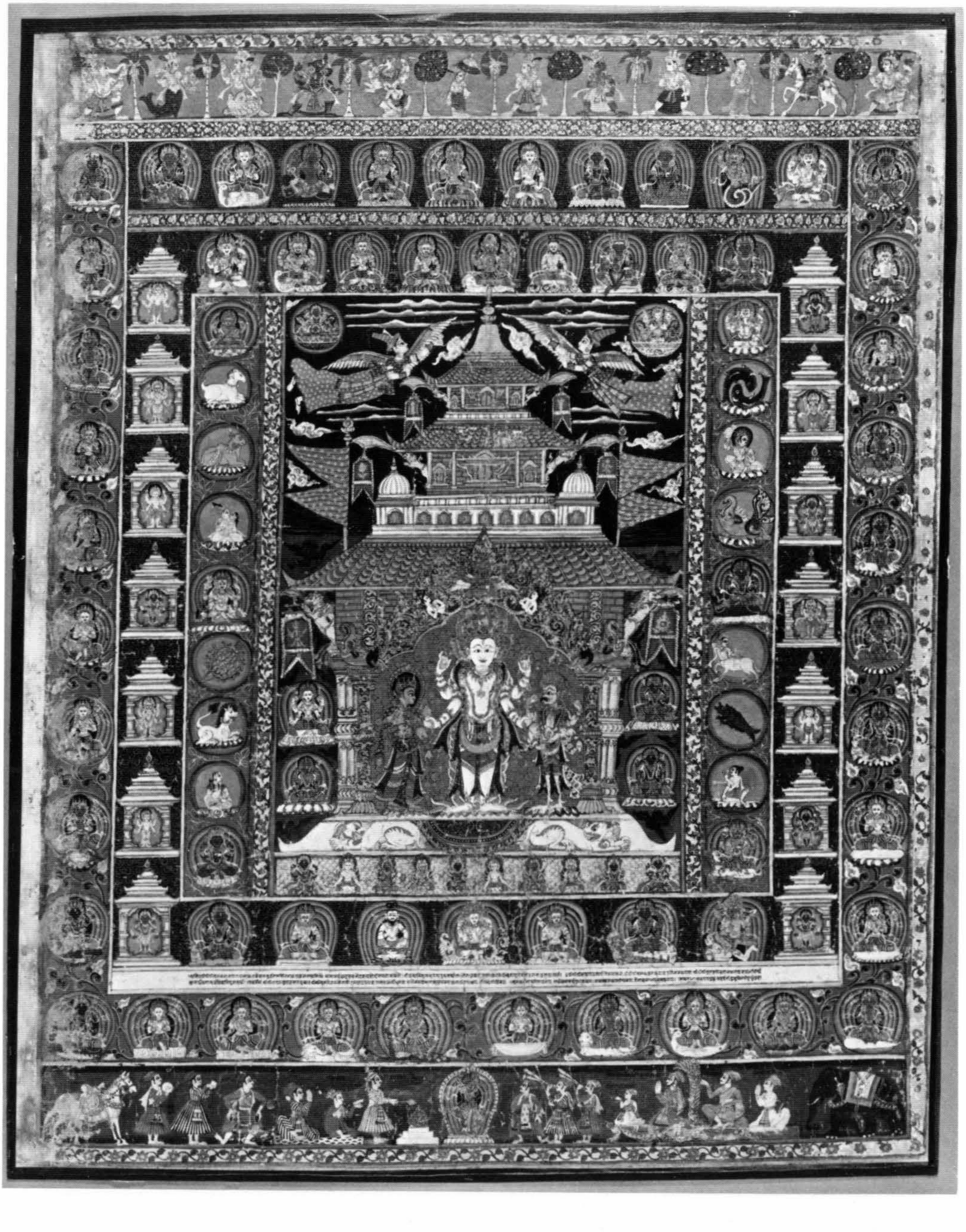
113. Buddha Preaching, 1649, H. 1 m. 9.8 cm. The Cleveland Museum of Art, Purchase from the J. H. Wade Fund.



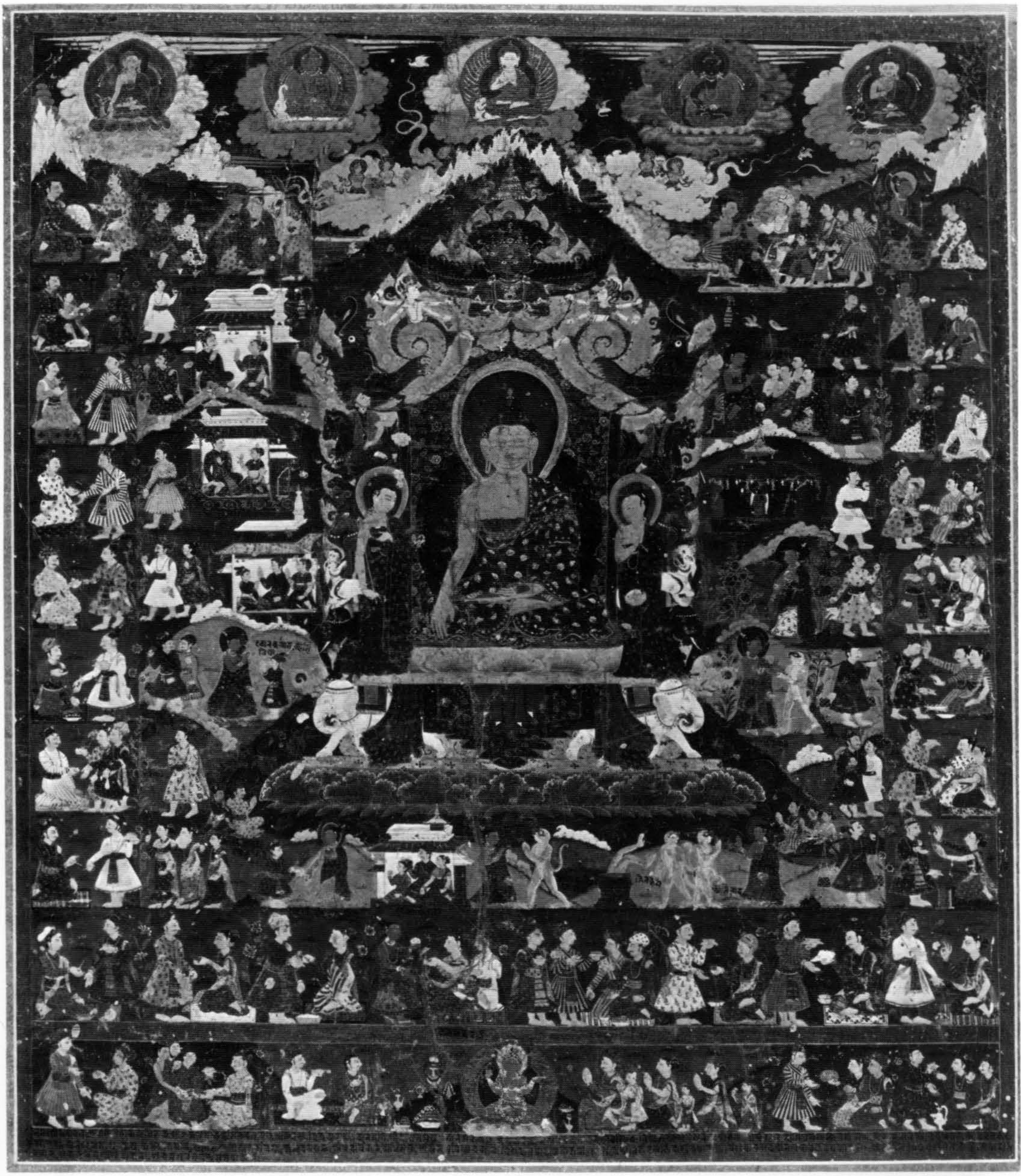
114. Śiva and Durgā in union, 1659, H. 94.5 cm. National Art Gallery, Bhadgaon.



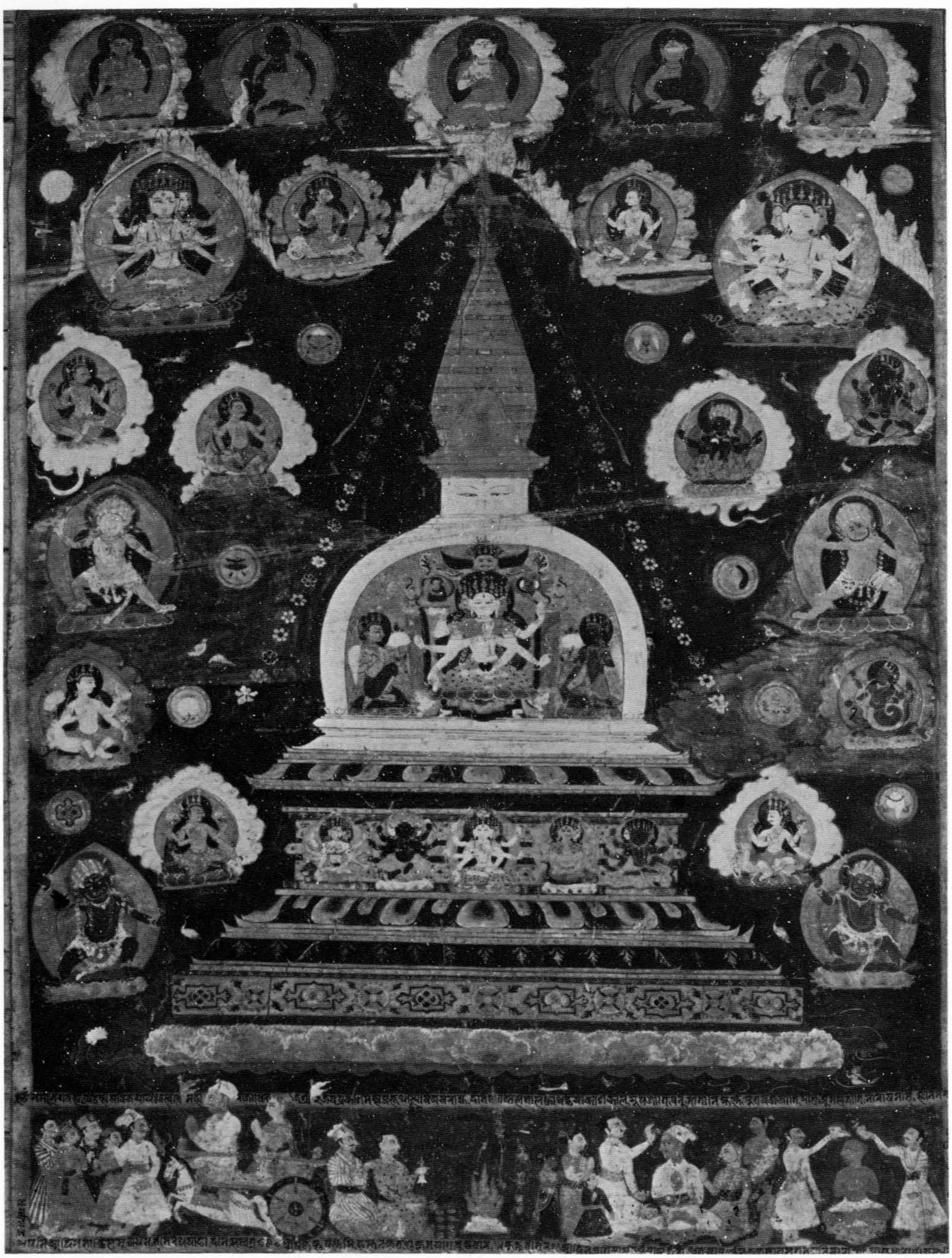
115. Shrine of Viṣṇu, 1681, H. 1 m. 2.9 cm. Prince of Wales Museum, Bombay.



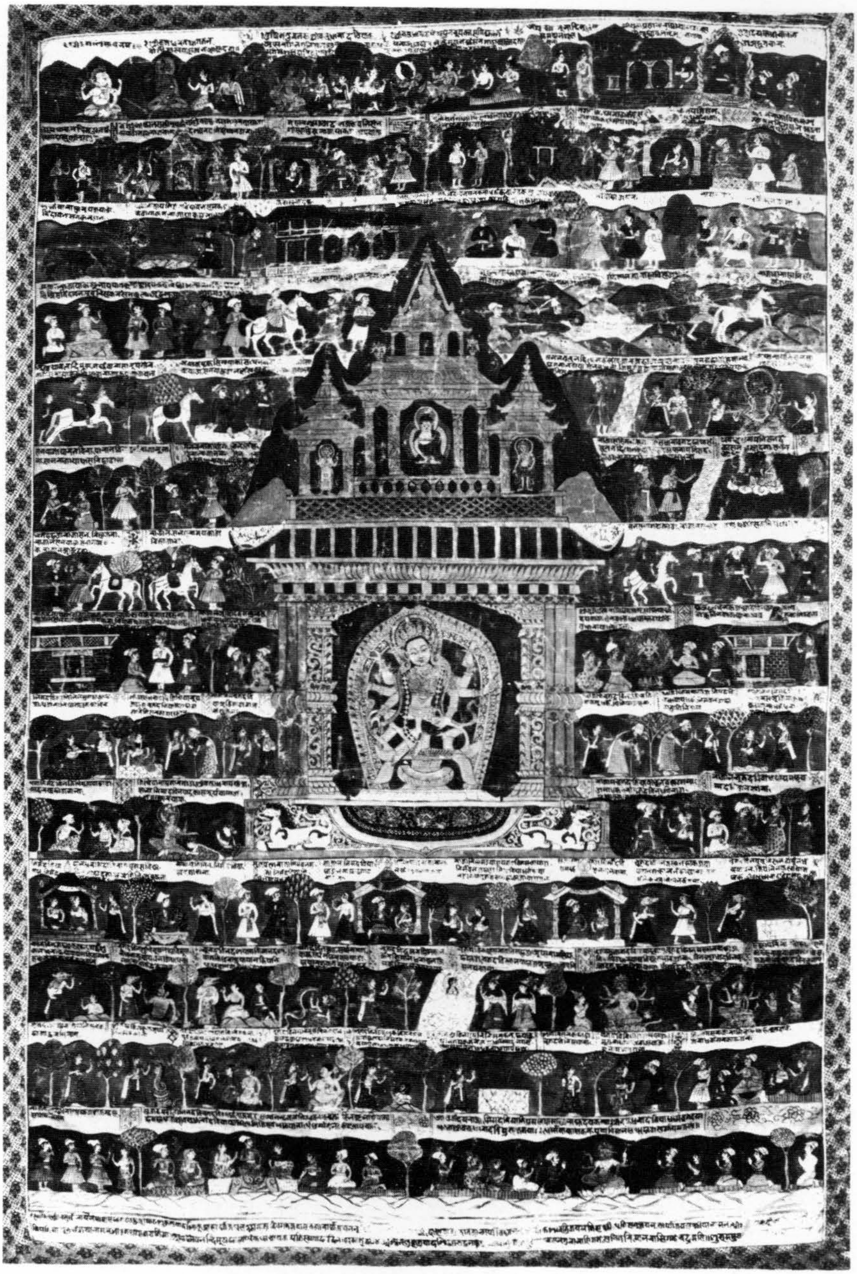
116. Shrine of Viṣṇu, 1681, H. 1 m. 66.5 cm. Los Angeles County Museum of Art.



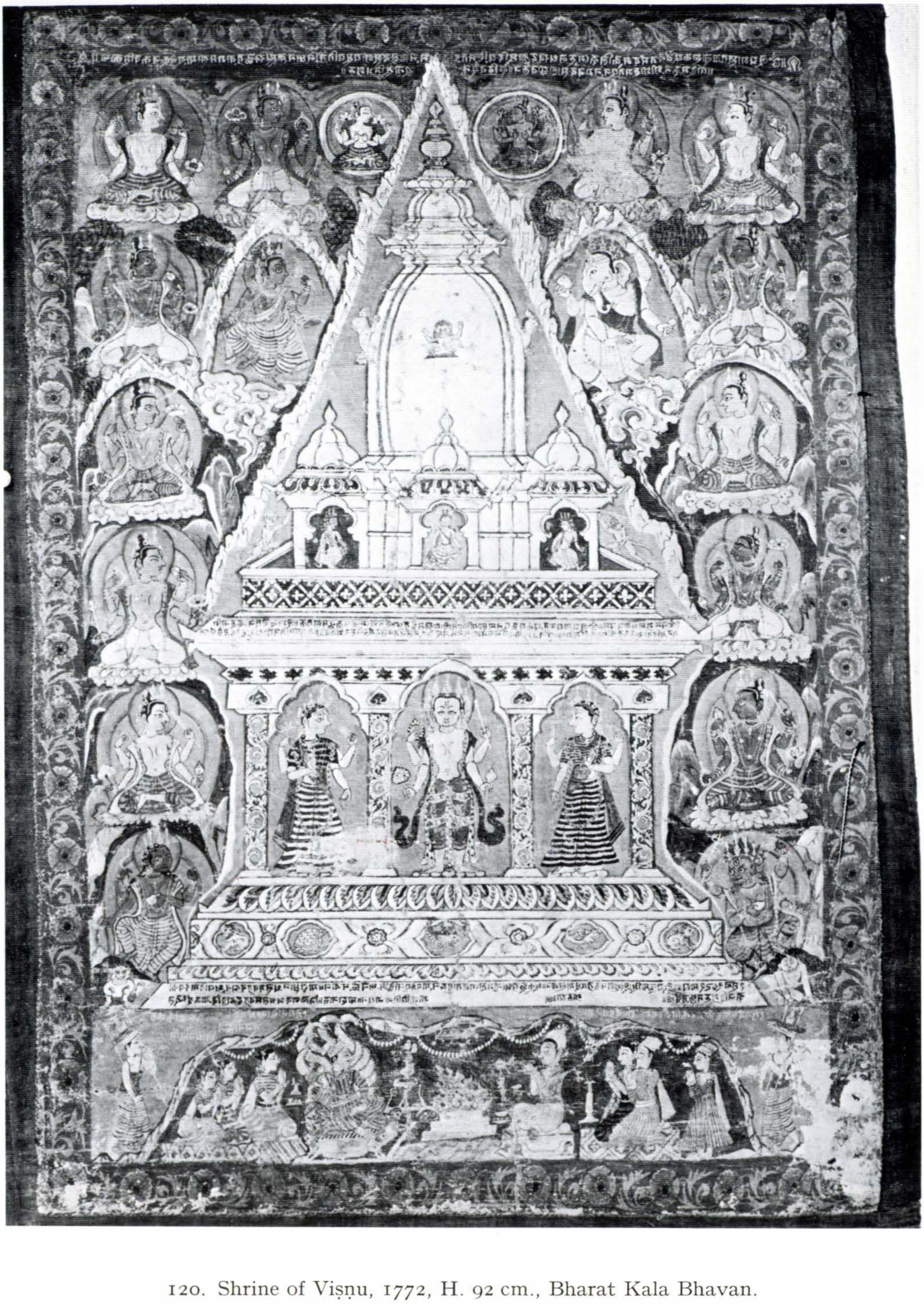
117. Piṇḍapātra Avadāna, 1716, H. 74.1 cm., Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, Gift of Edward Forbes.



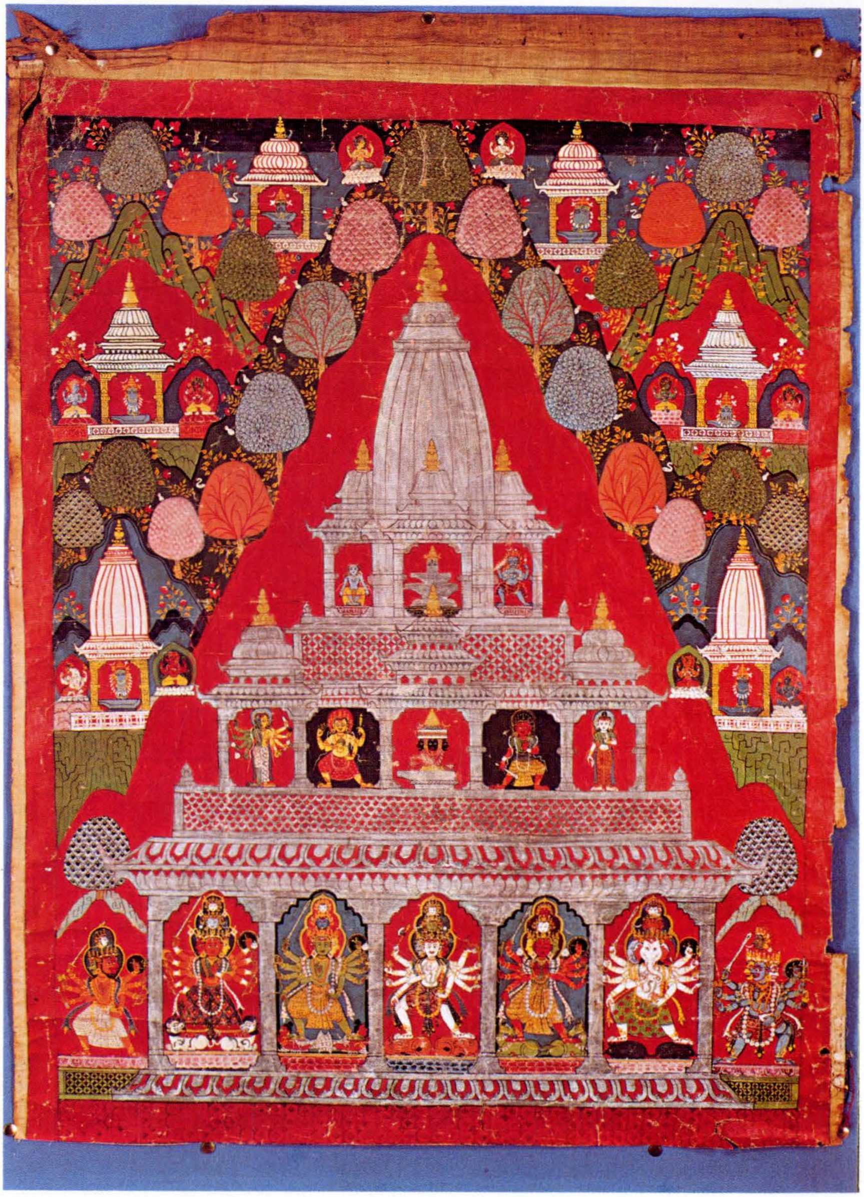
118. Bhīmaratha commemoration Paubhā, 1720, H. 67 cm. Rijksmuseum voor Volkenkunde, Leiden.



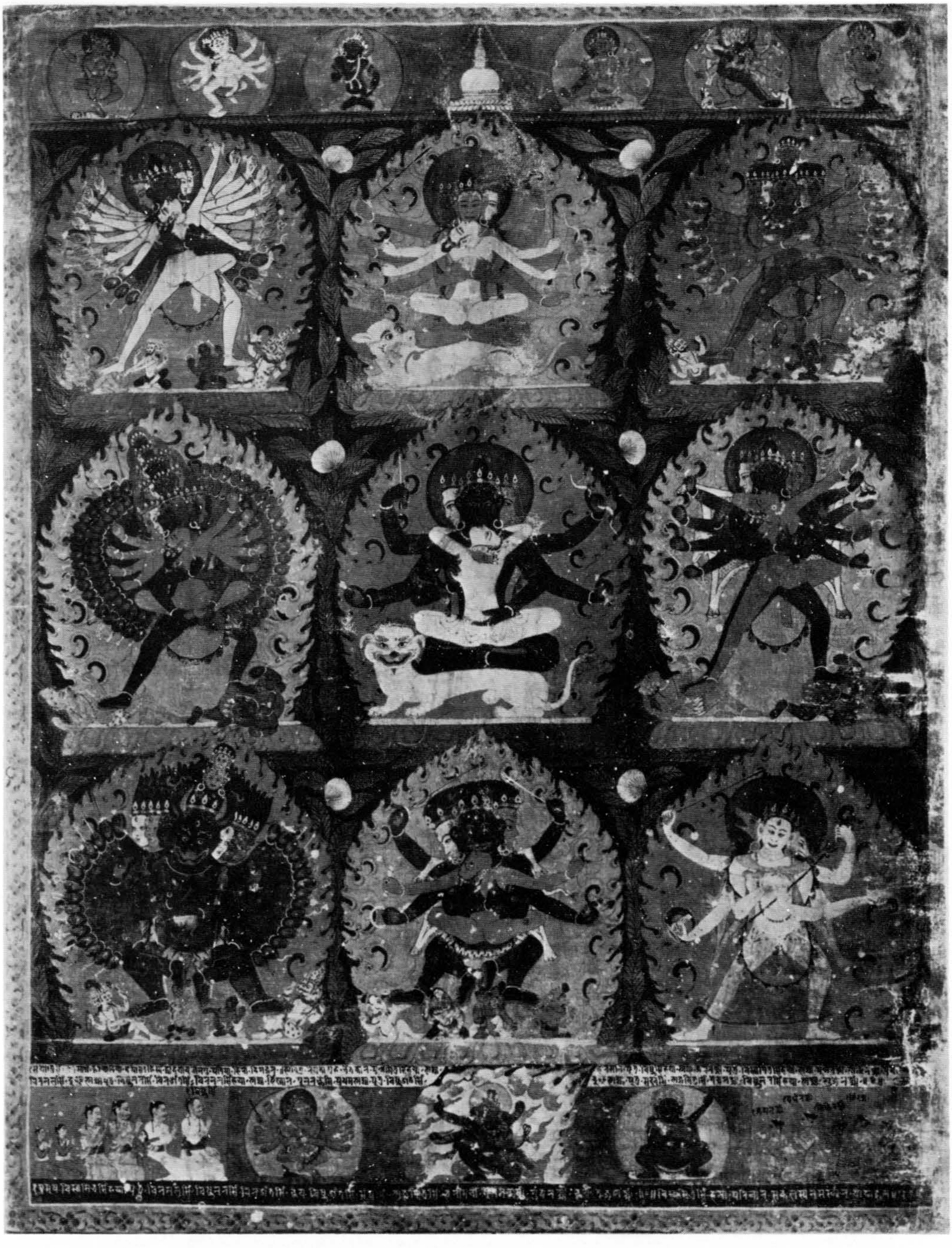
119. Shrine of Vasudhārā and Aśvaghoṣa Avadāna, 1744, H. 104.2 cm. Zimmerman Collection.



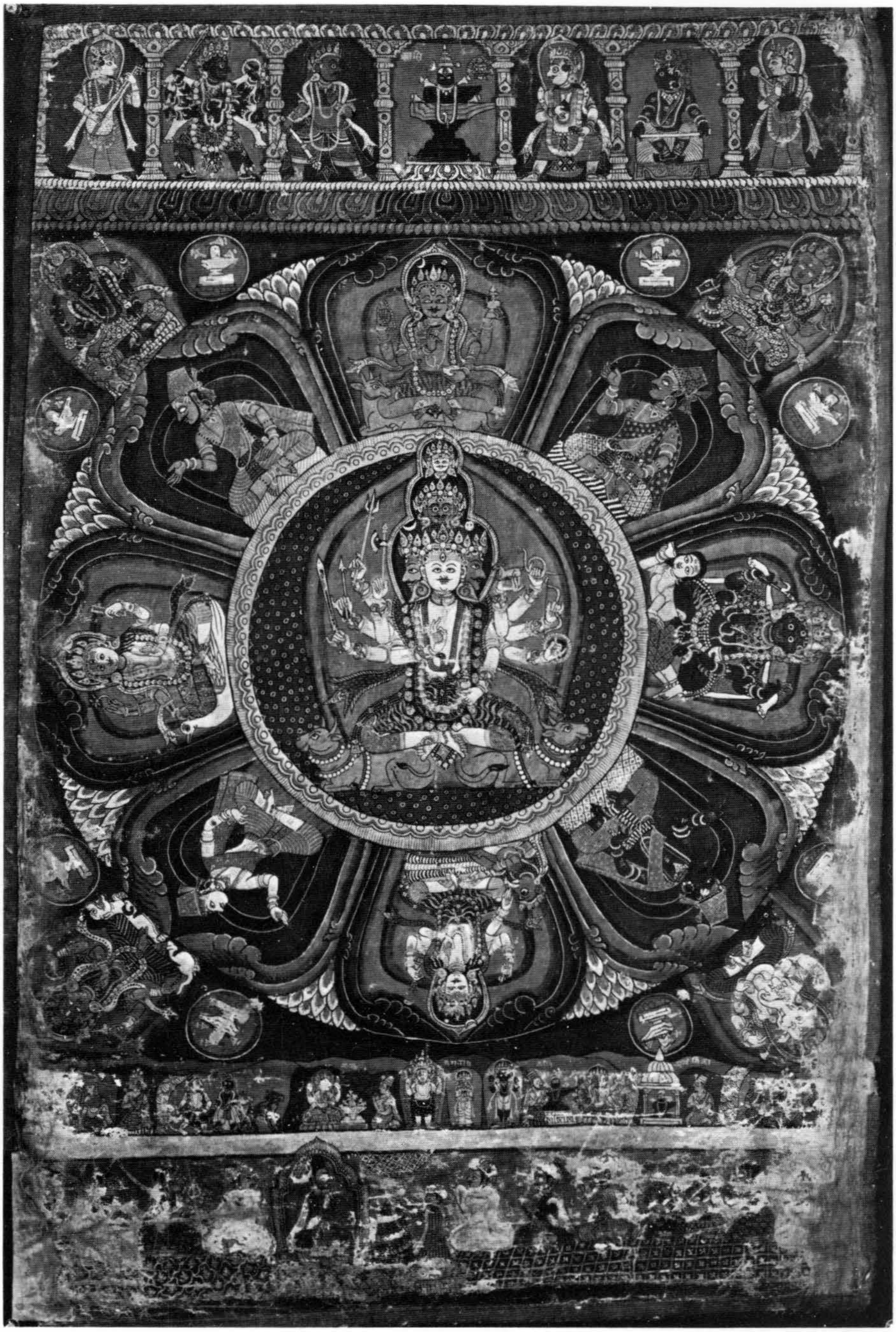
120. Shrine of Viṣṇu, 1772, H. 92 cm., Bharat Kala Bhavan.



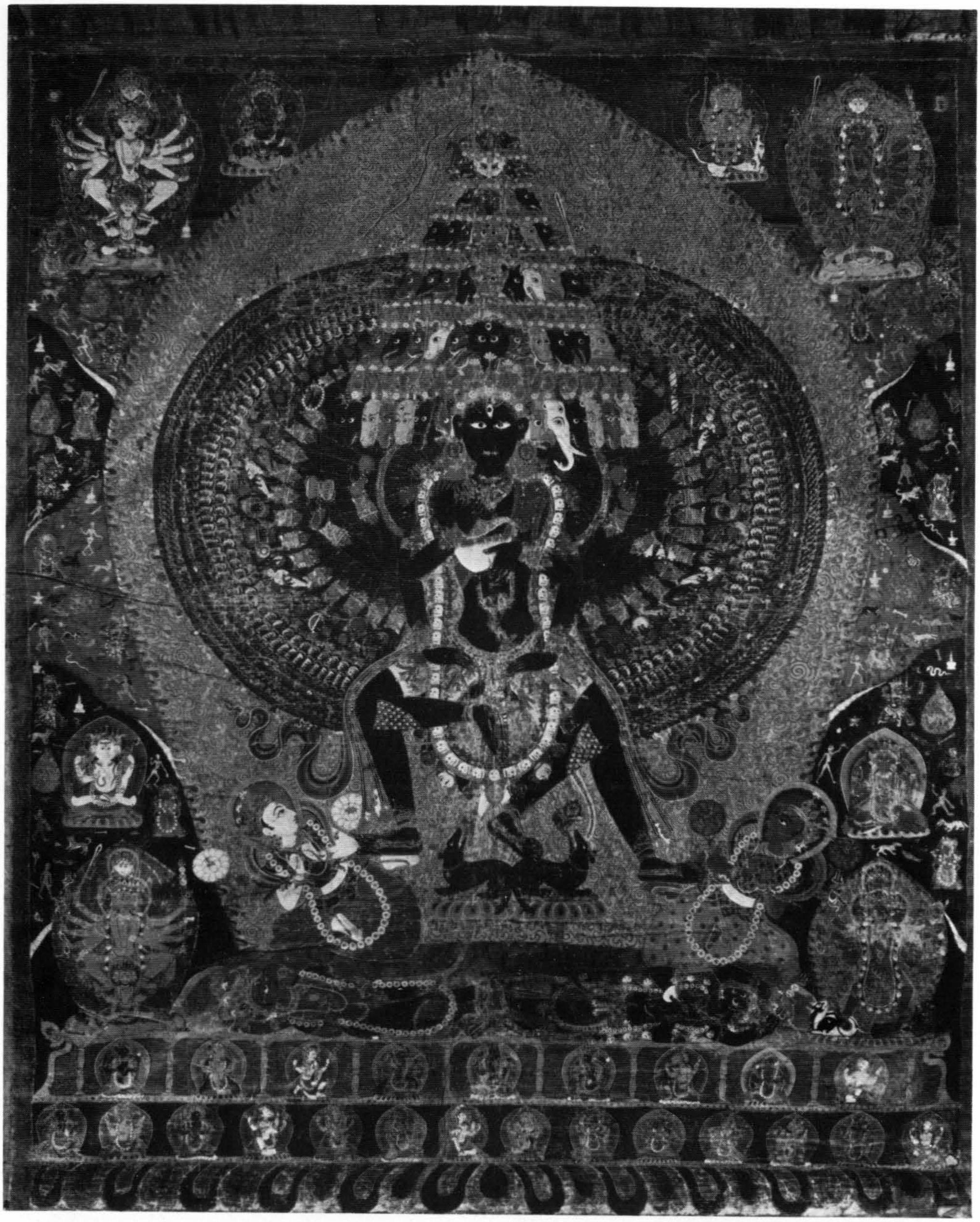
121. Śaiva shrines, ca. 1750, H. 1 m. 8 cm. Los Angeles County Museum of Art, Gift of Mr. and Mrs. Richard E. Sherwood and Christian Humann.



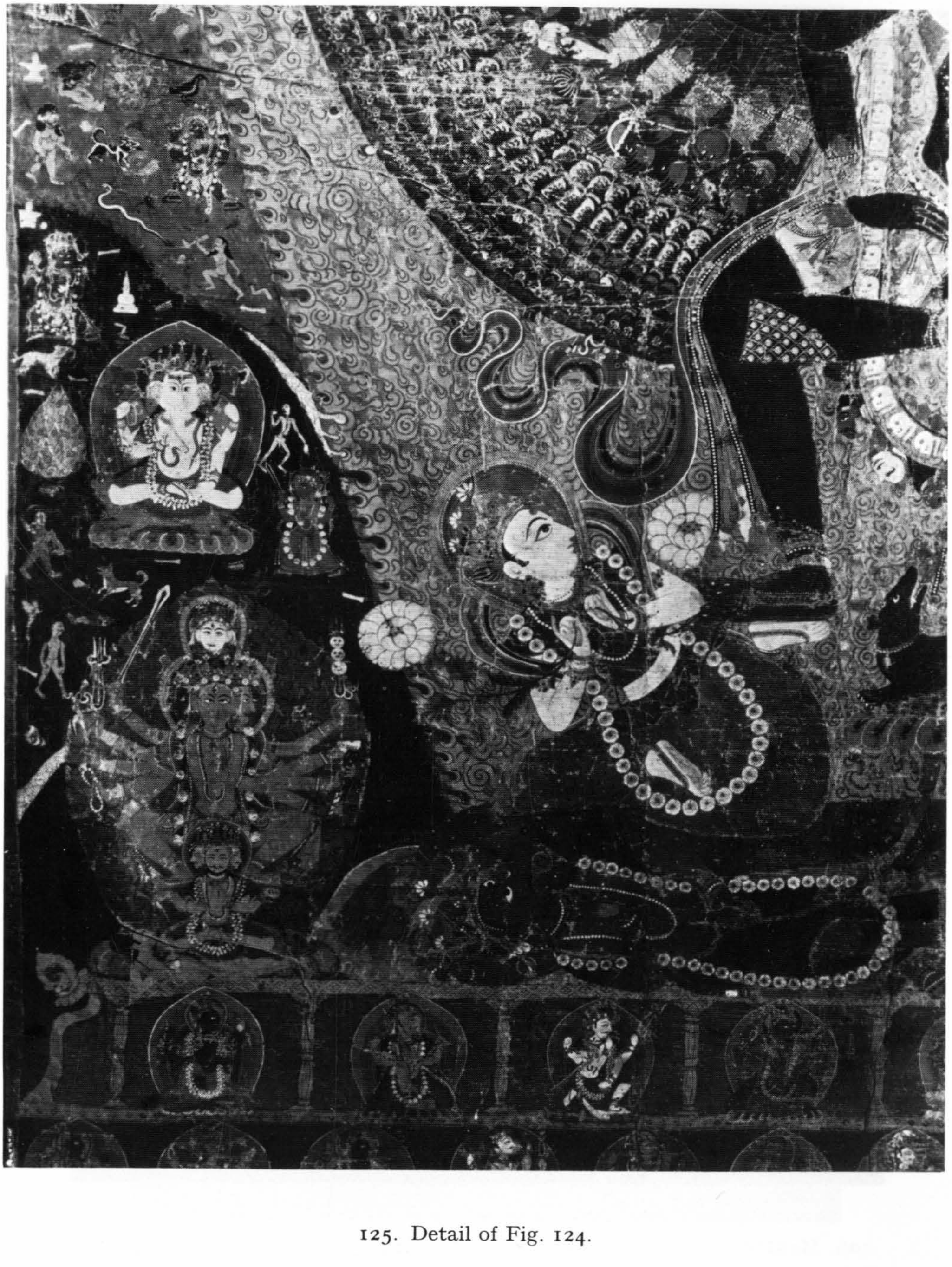
122. Esoteric Buddhist Deities, 1775, H. 74.3 cm. Private Collection.



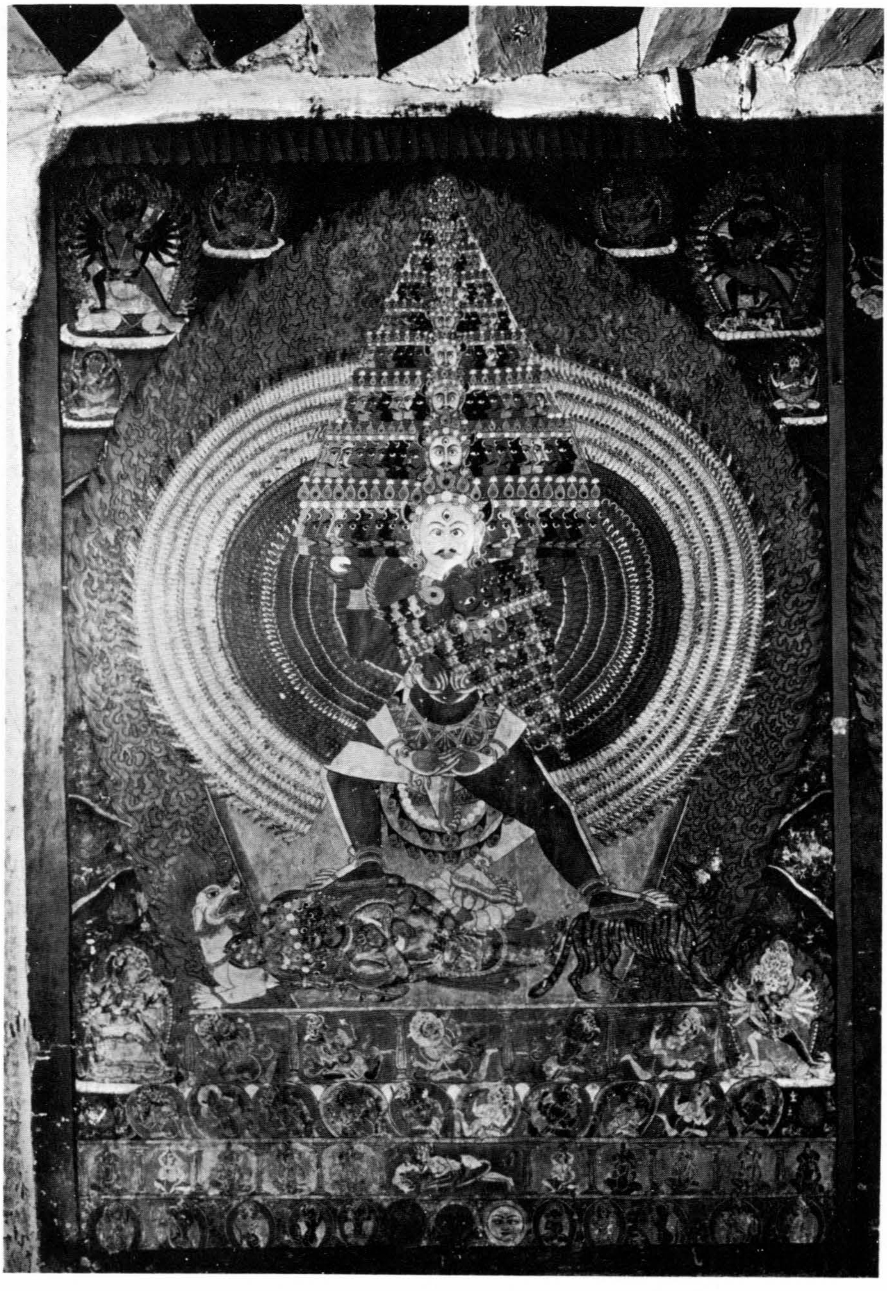
123. Śaivamandala, ca. 1775, H. 96.3 cm. Doris Wiener Gallery.



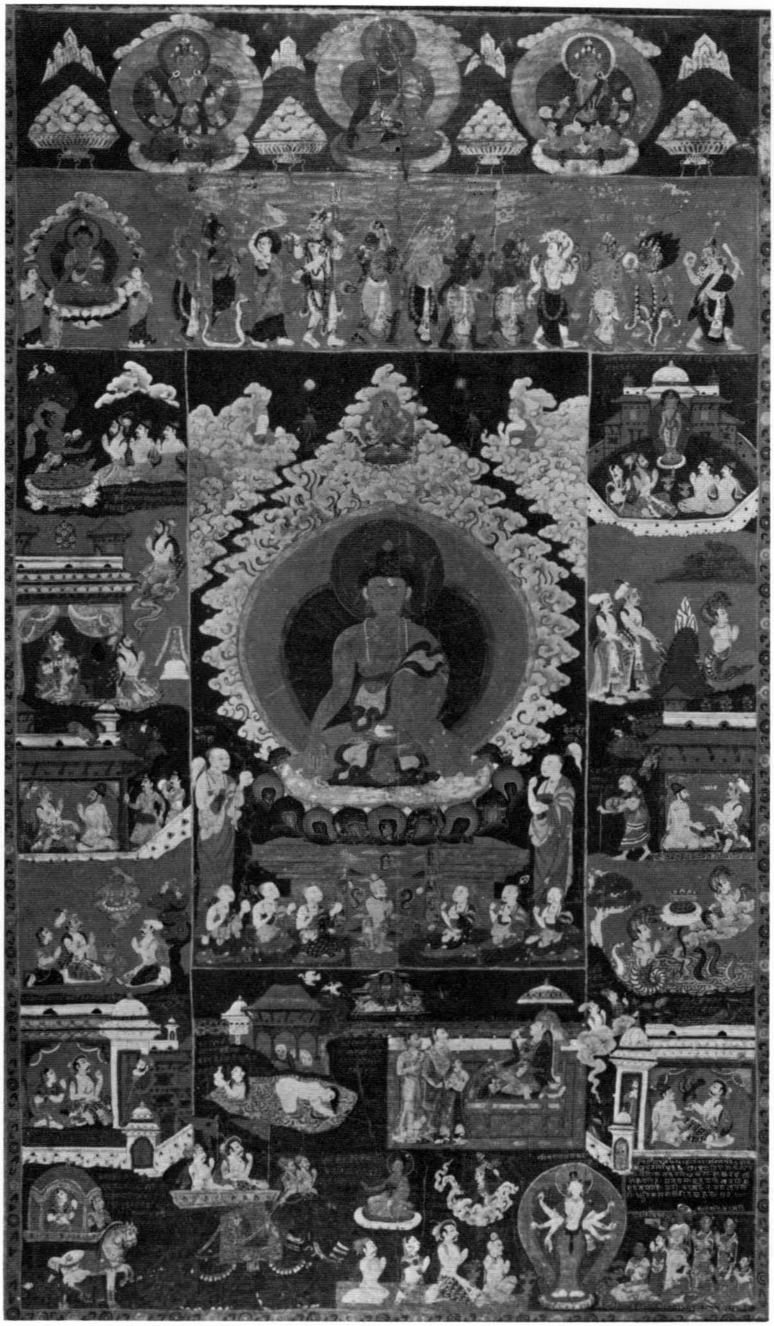
124. The Goddess Gūhyakālī, 1775-1800, H. 1 m. 62.5 cm. Zimmerman Collection.



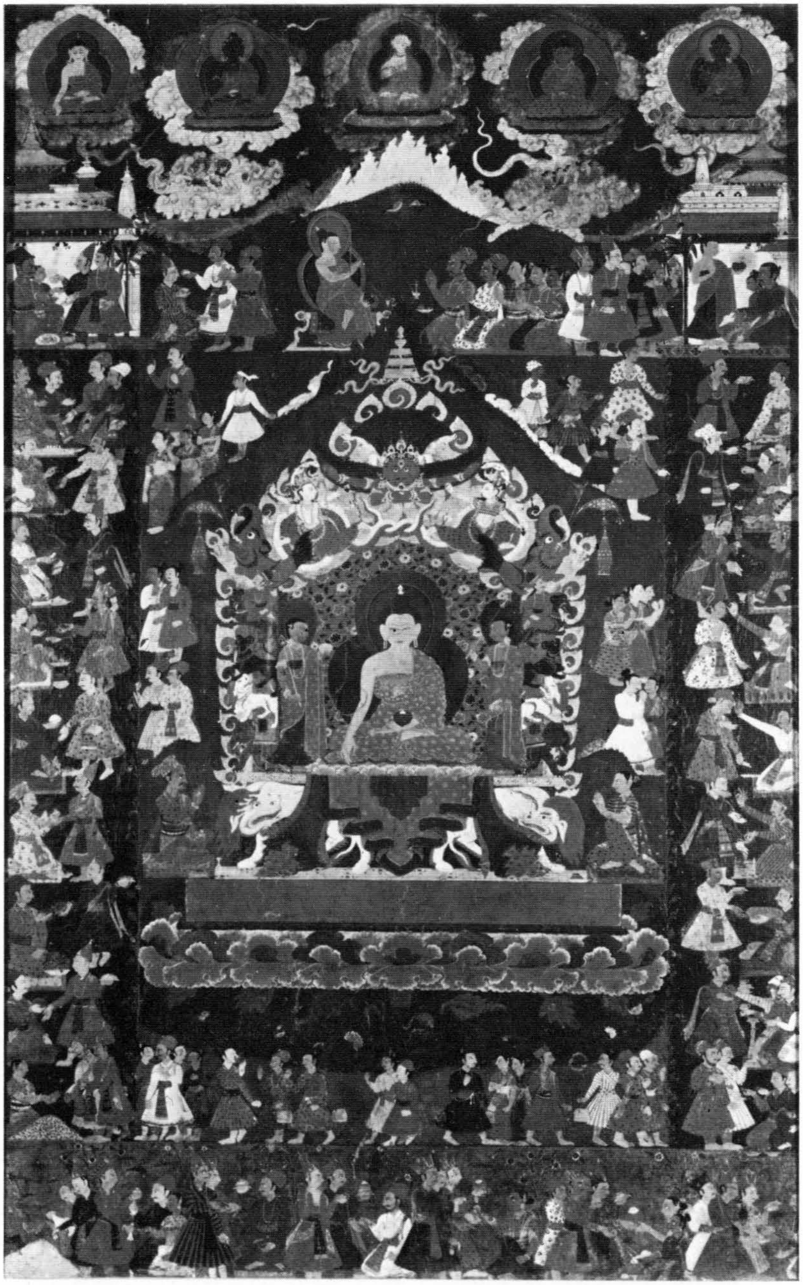
125. Detail of Fig. 124.



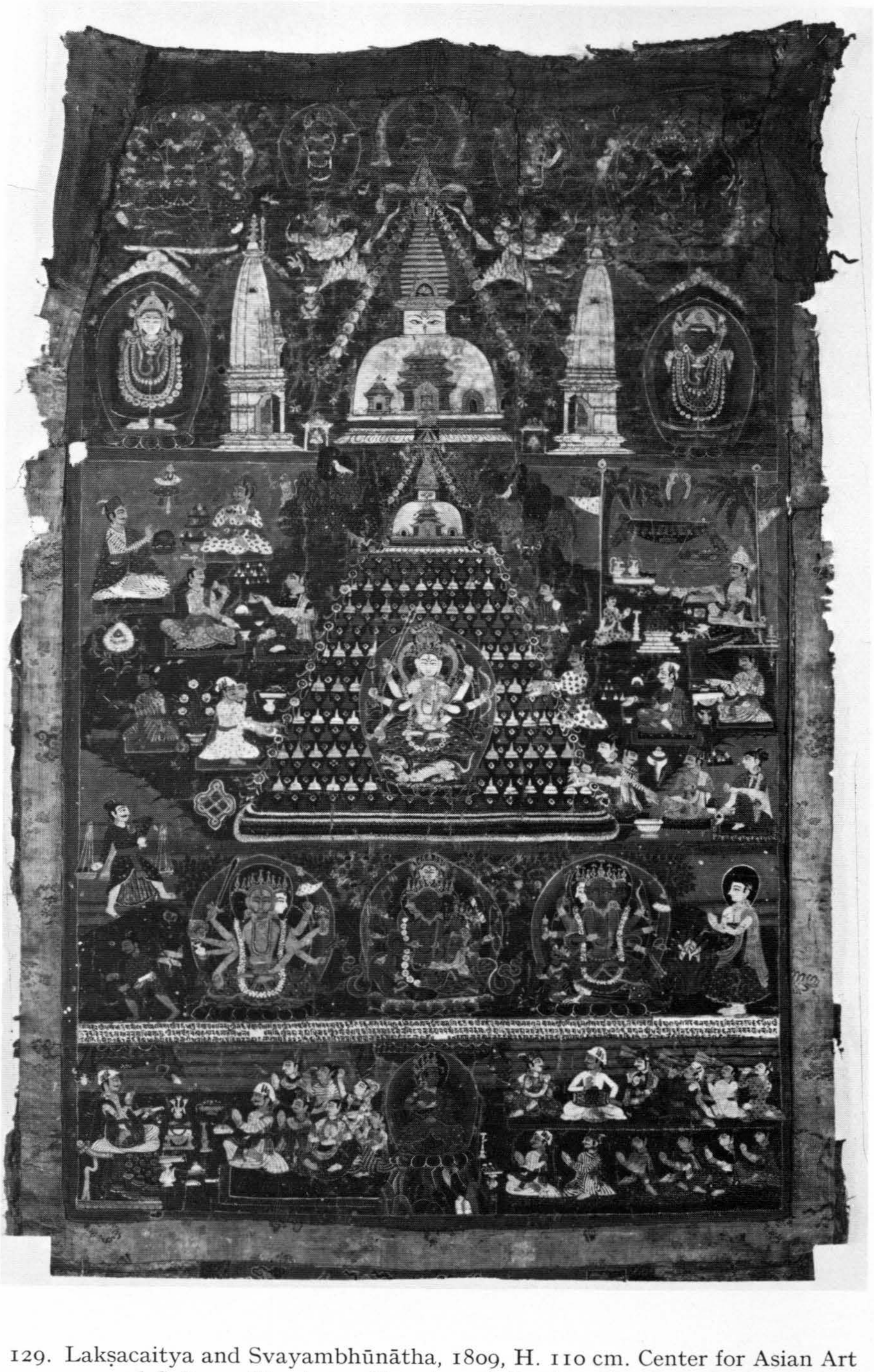
126. Mahābhairava and Bhairavī in union, Mural, ca. 1775. Hanumandhoka, Kathmandu.



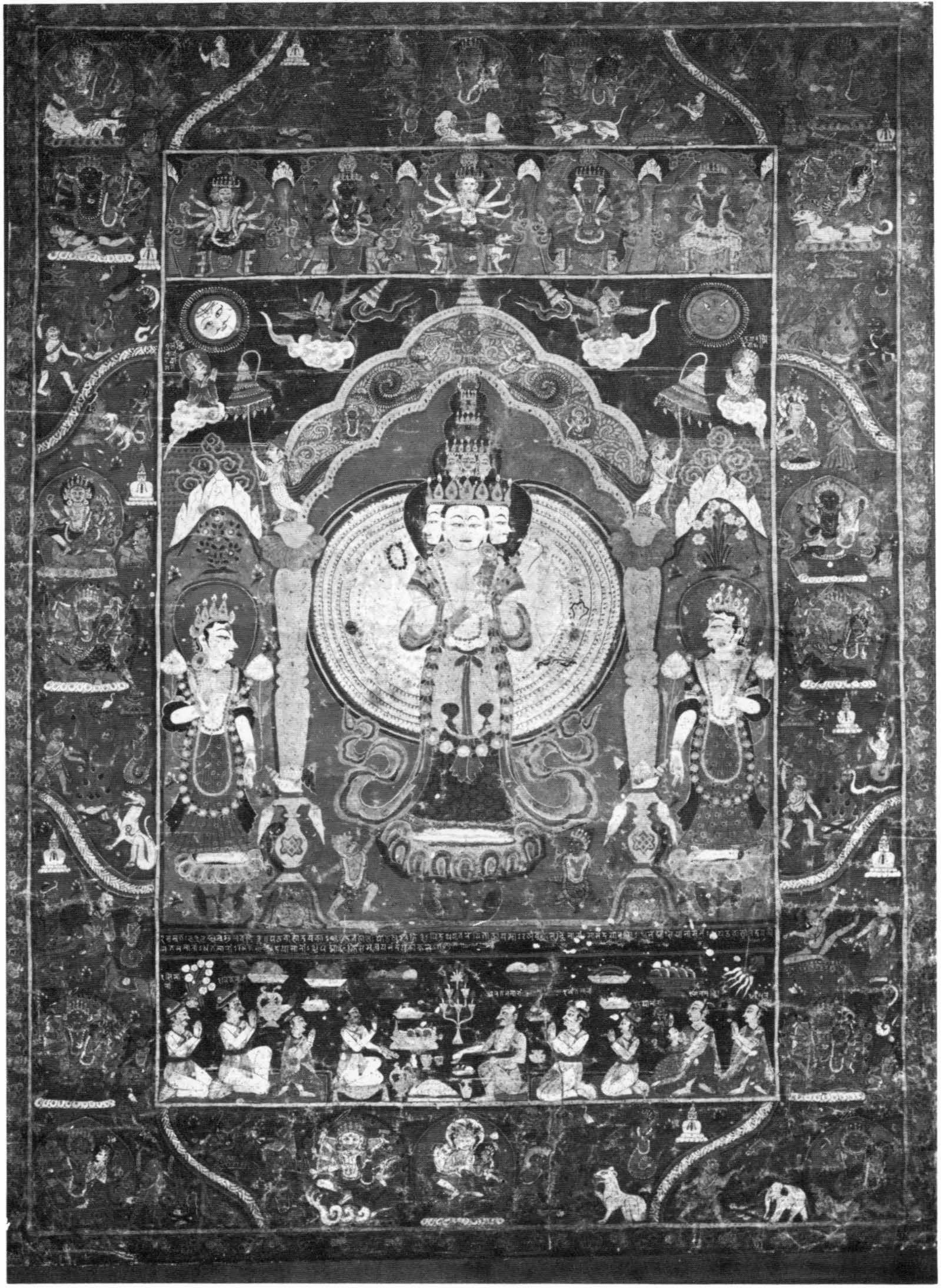
127. Upoṣadha Avadāna, 1807, H. 129.5 cm. Victoria and Albert Museum.



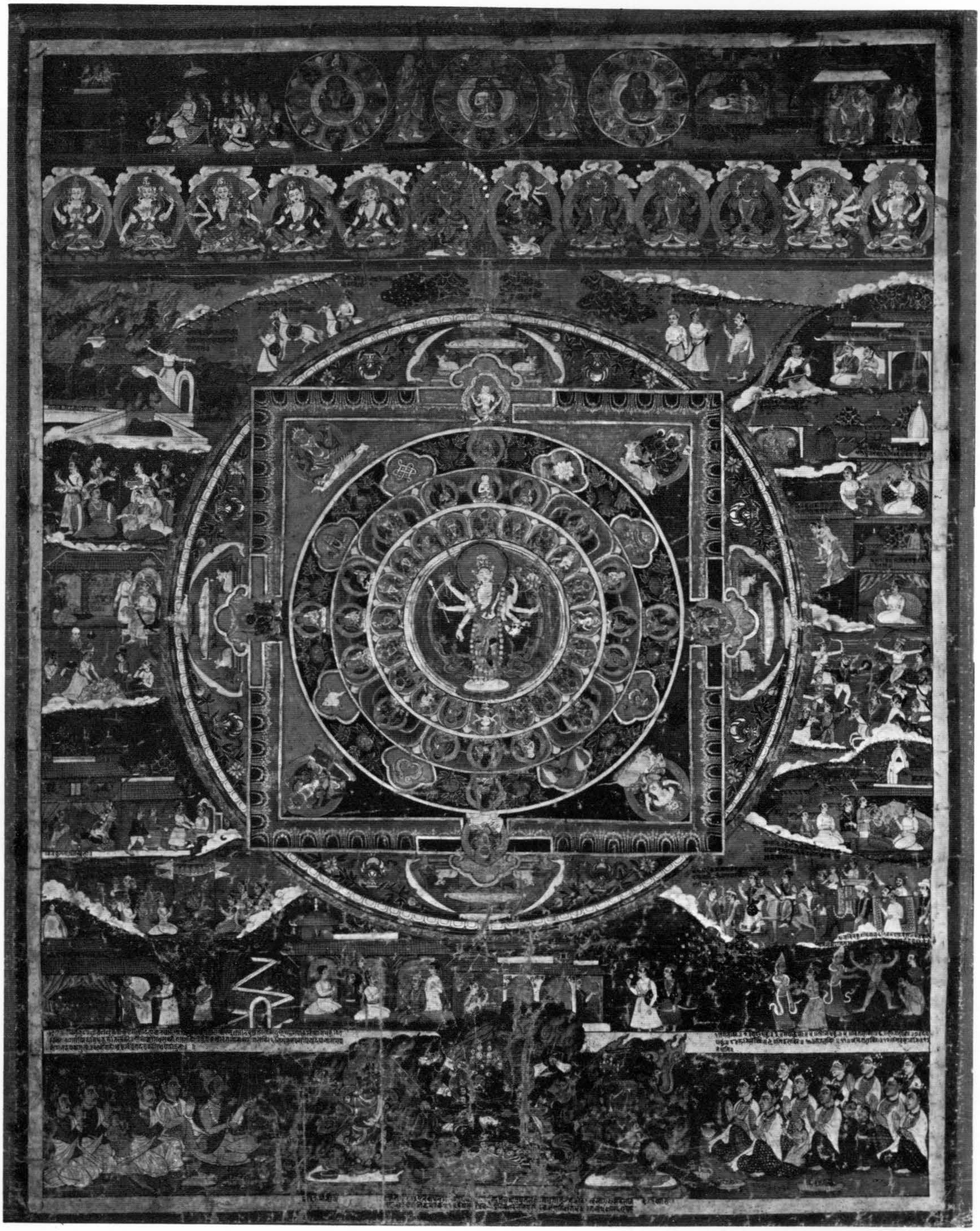
128. Piṇḍapātra Avadāna, 19th century, Victoria and Albert Museum.



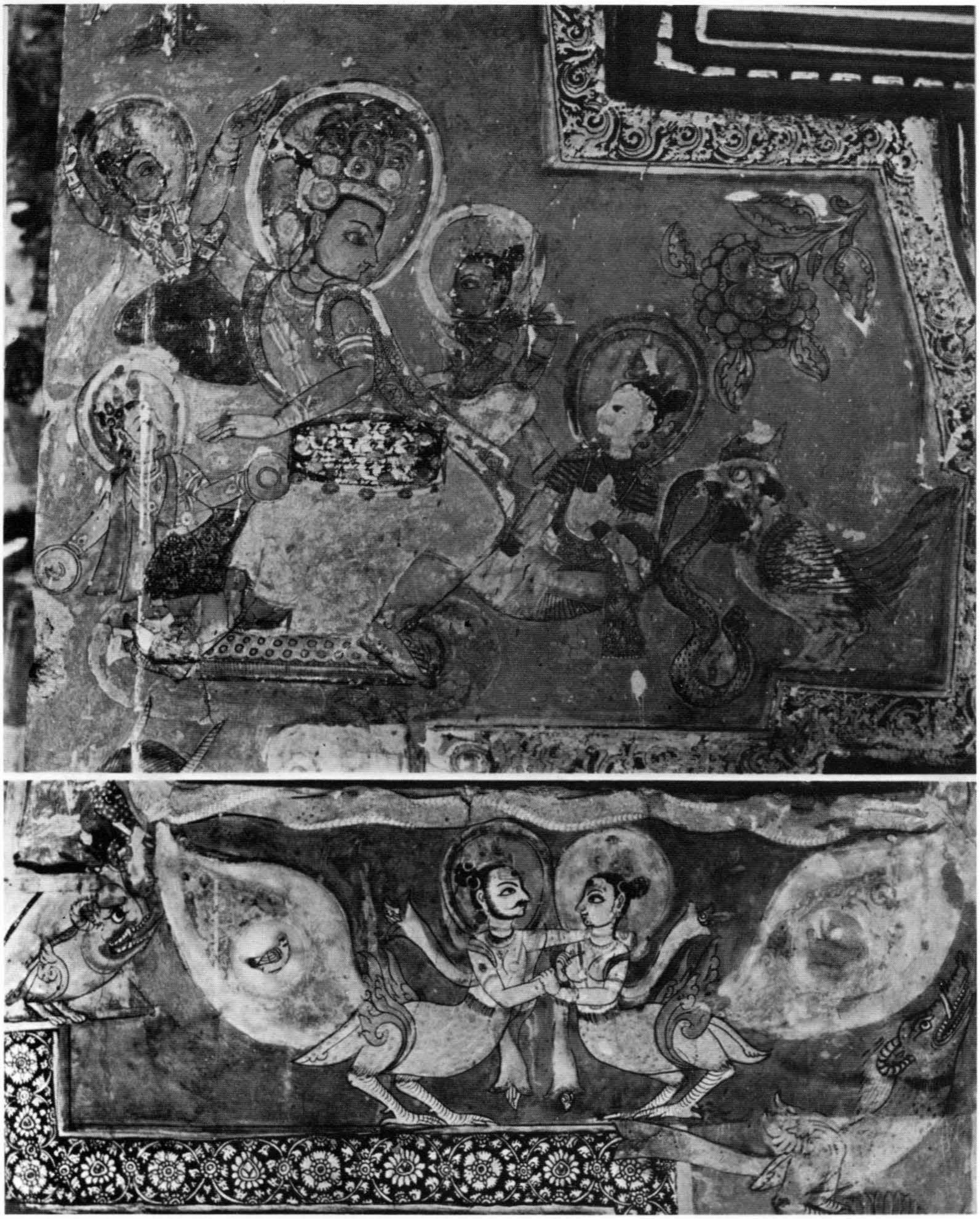
129. Lakṣacaitya and Svayambhūnātha, 1809, H. 110 cm. Center for Asian Art and Culture, The Avery Brundage Collection, San Francisco.



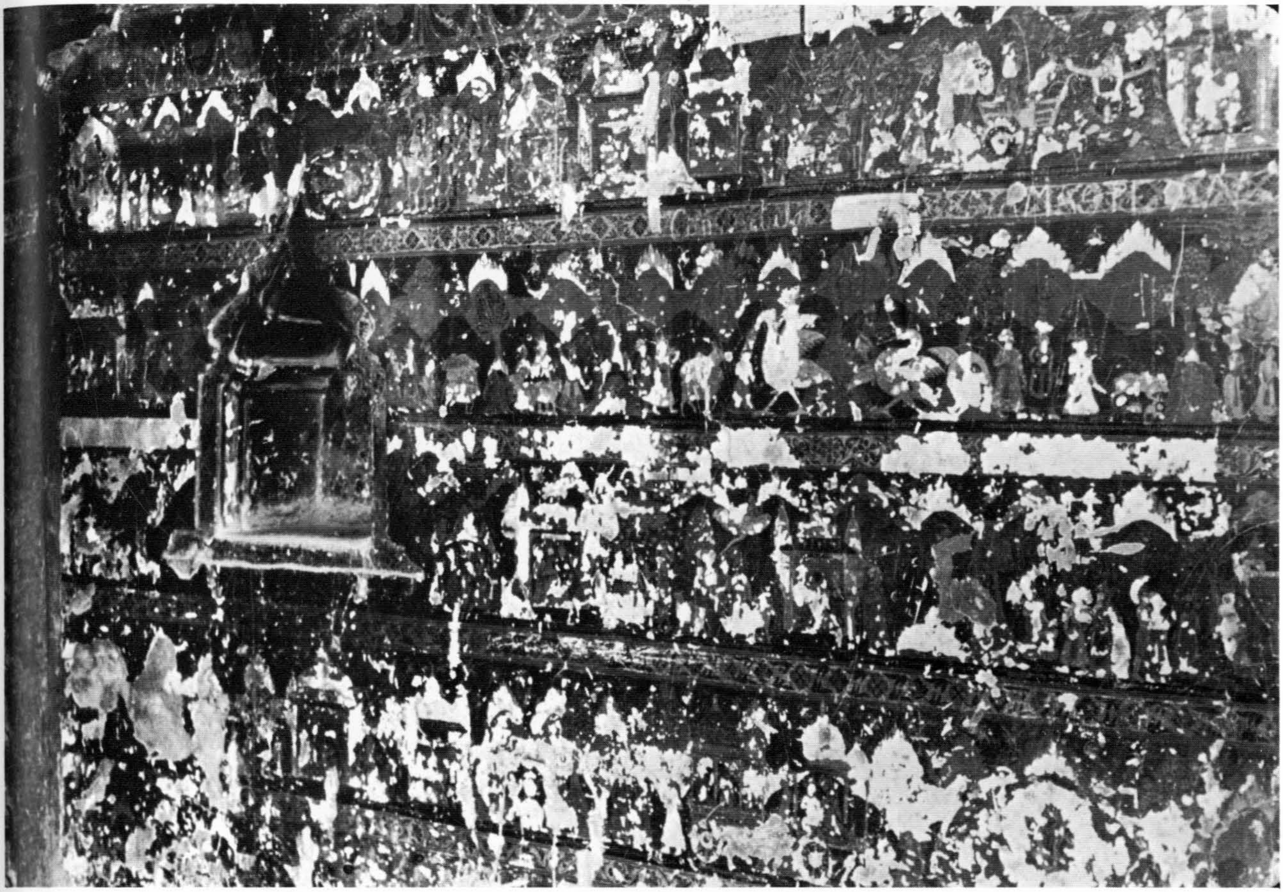
130. Thousand-armed Lokeśvara, 1819, H. 111.8 cm. The British Museum.



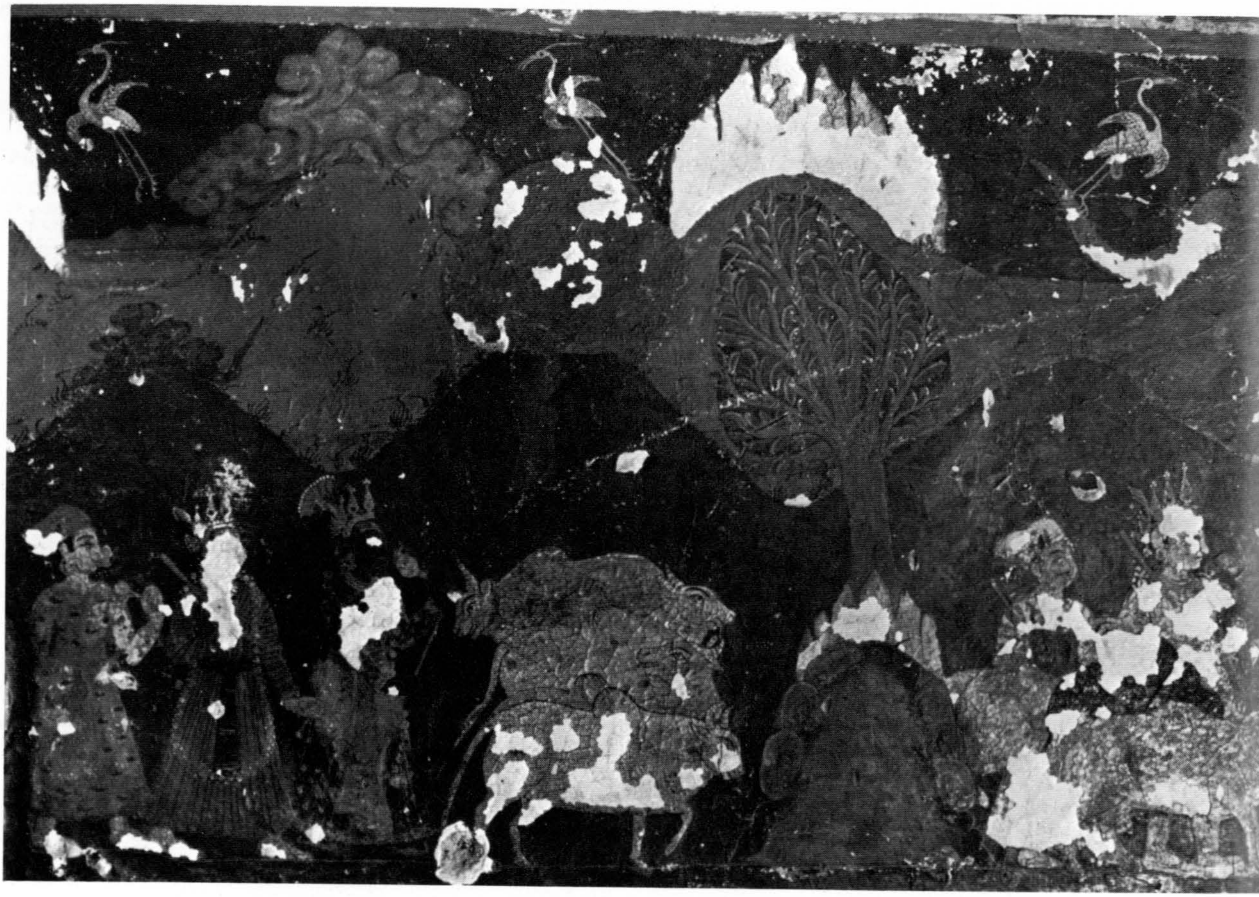
131. Mandala of Amoghapāśa, 1862, H. 102.7 cm. The British Museum.



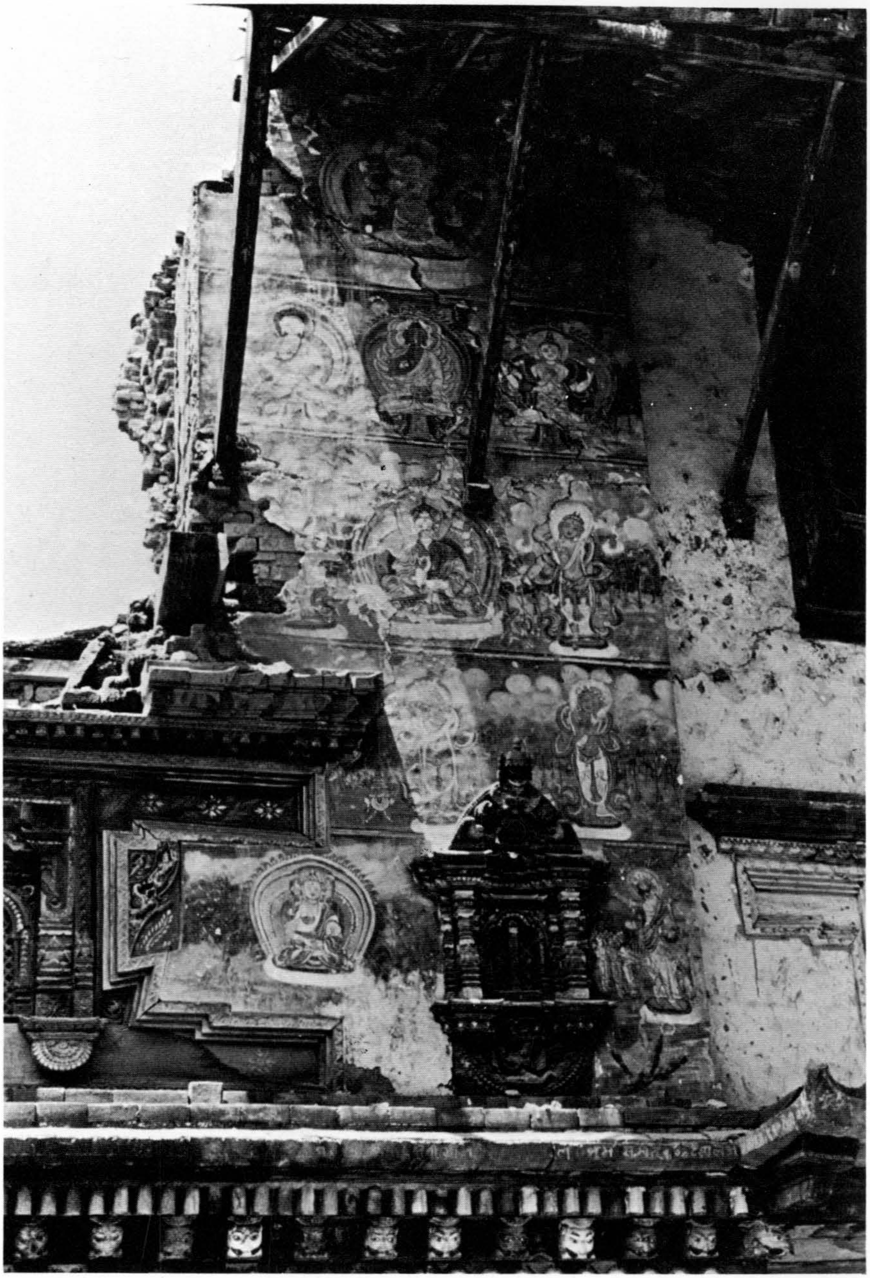
132. Section of a Wall Painting, ca. 17th century, Taleju Temple, Bhadgaon Palace.



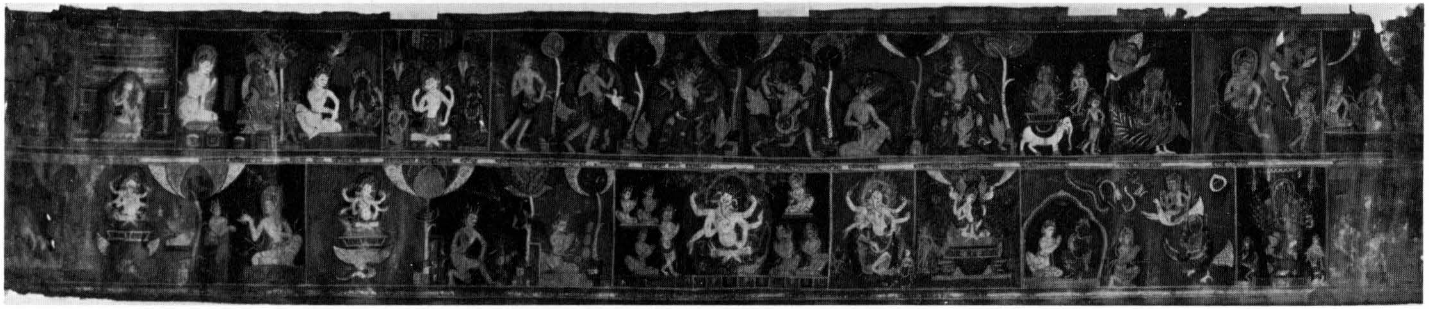
133. Wall-paintings depicting Kṛṣṇa story, 18th century, Hanumandhoka palace, Kathmandu.



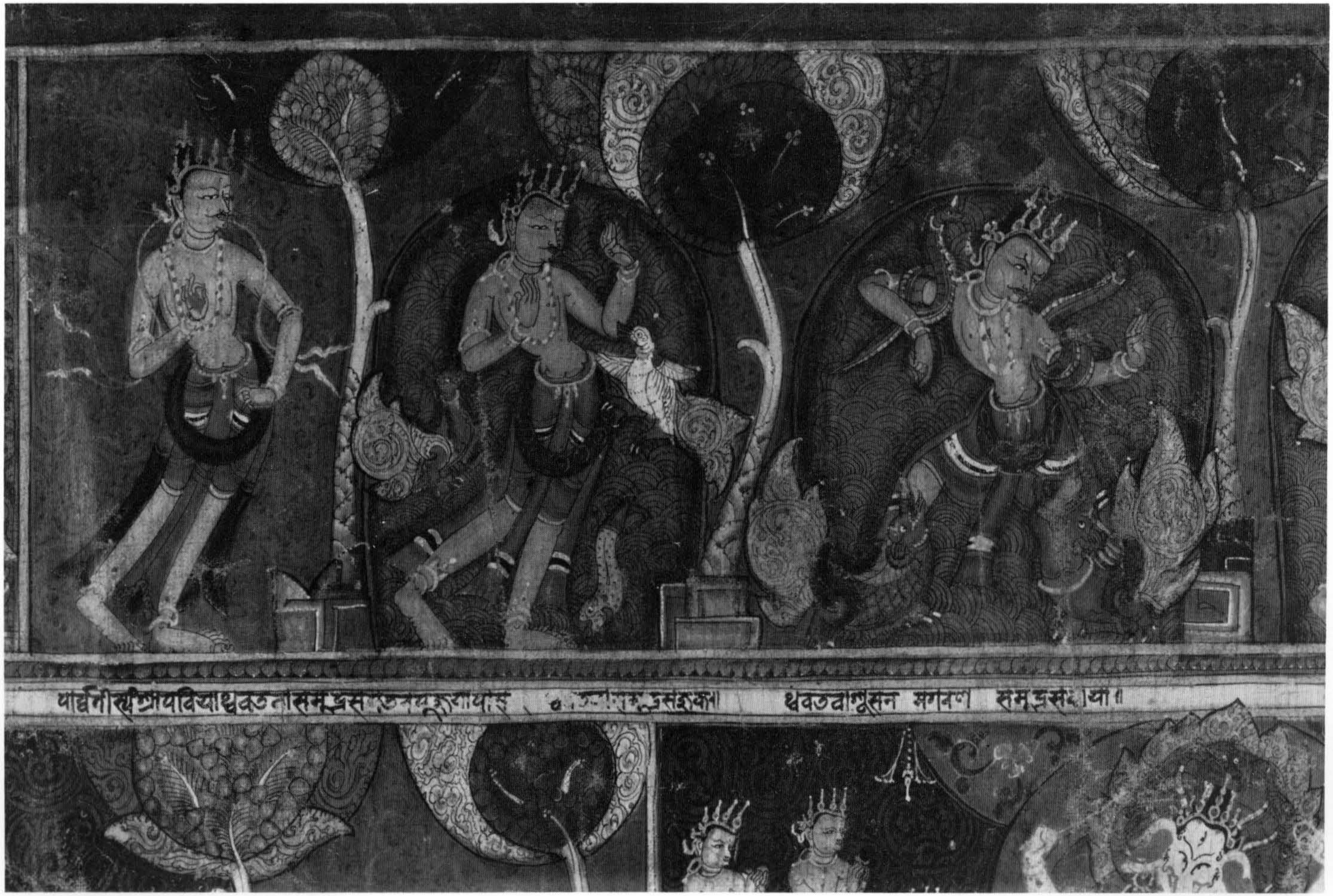
134. Detail of Fig. 133.



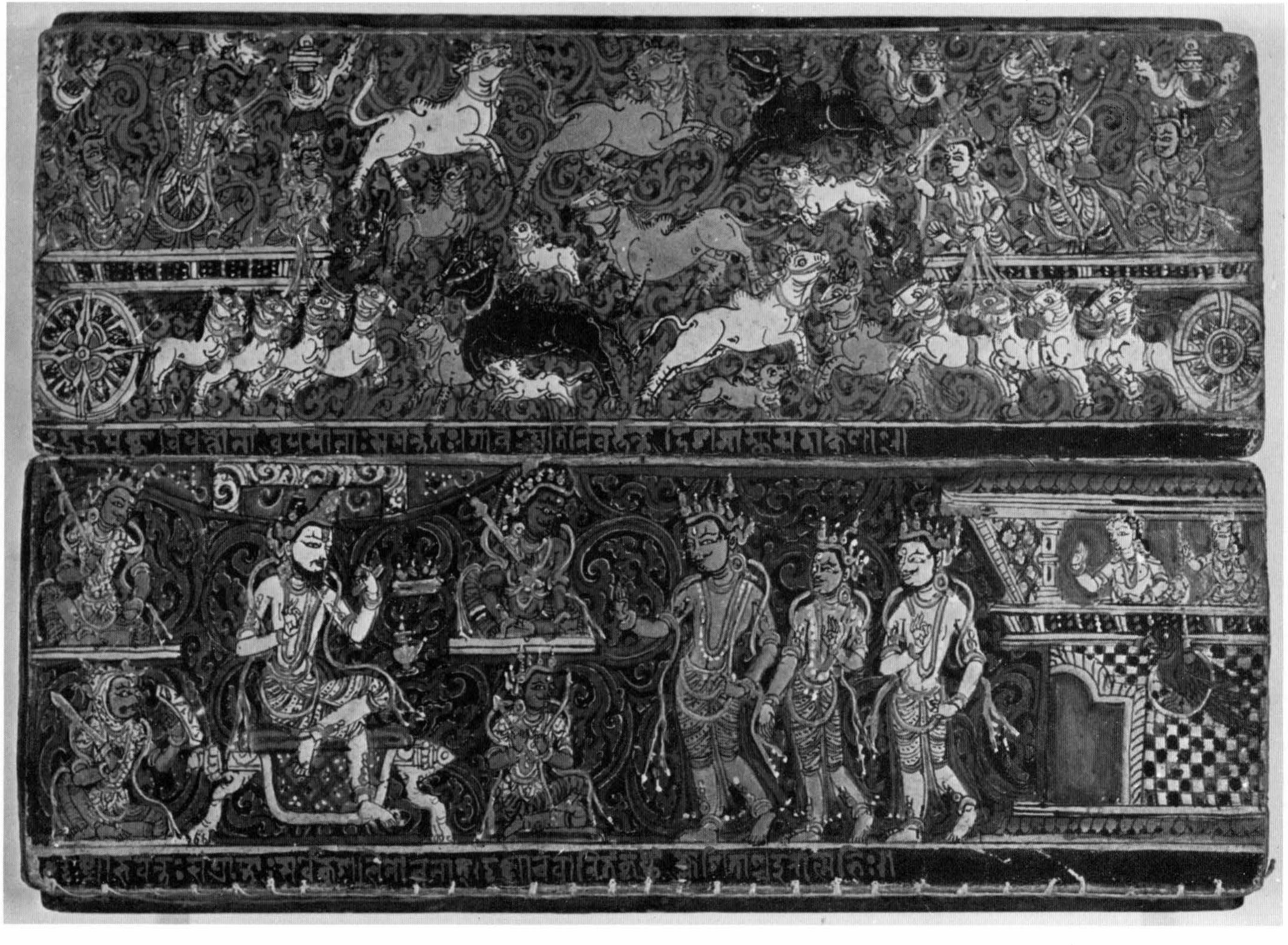
135. Wall-paintings, From a monastery, Patan, 1888 (?).



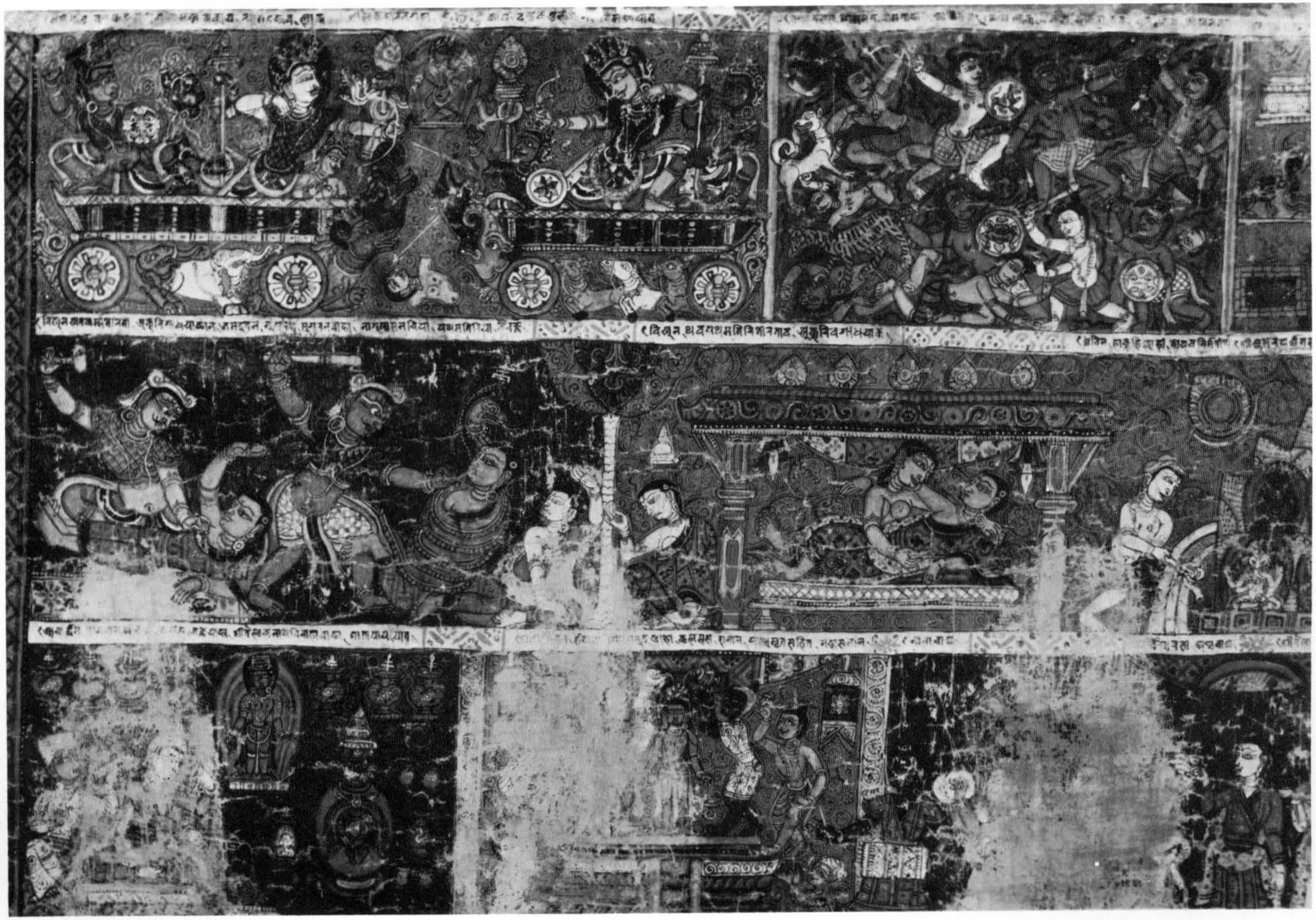
136. Manavināyaka scroll, ca. 1590, H. 36.9 cm., W. 1 m. 83 cm. Stephen T. Eckerd, California.



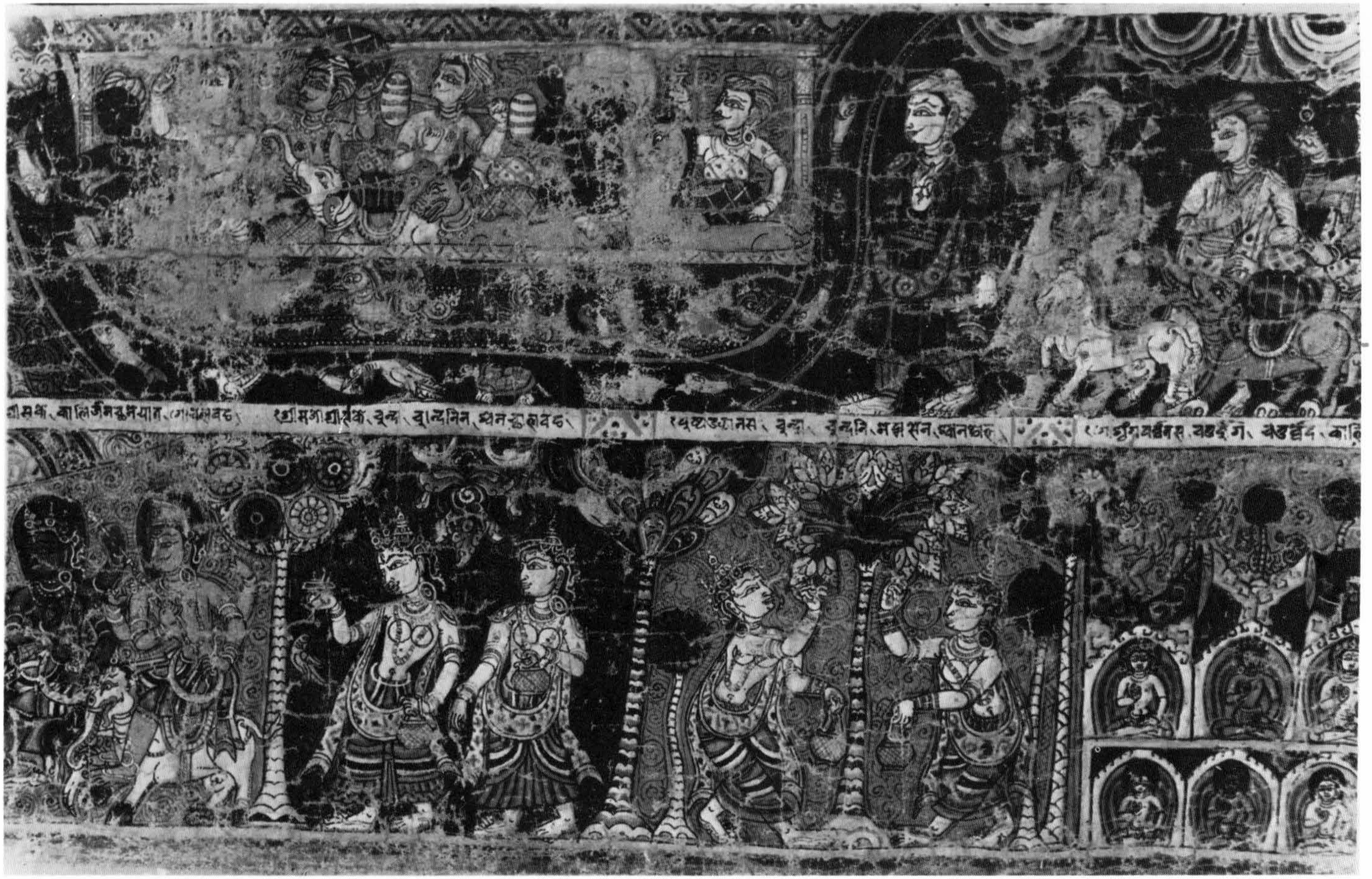
137. Detail of Fig. 136.



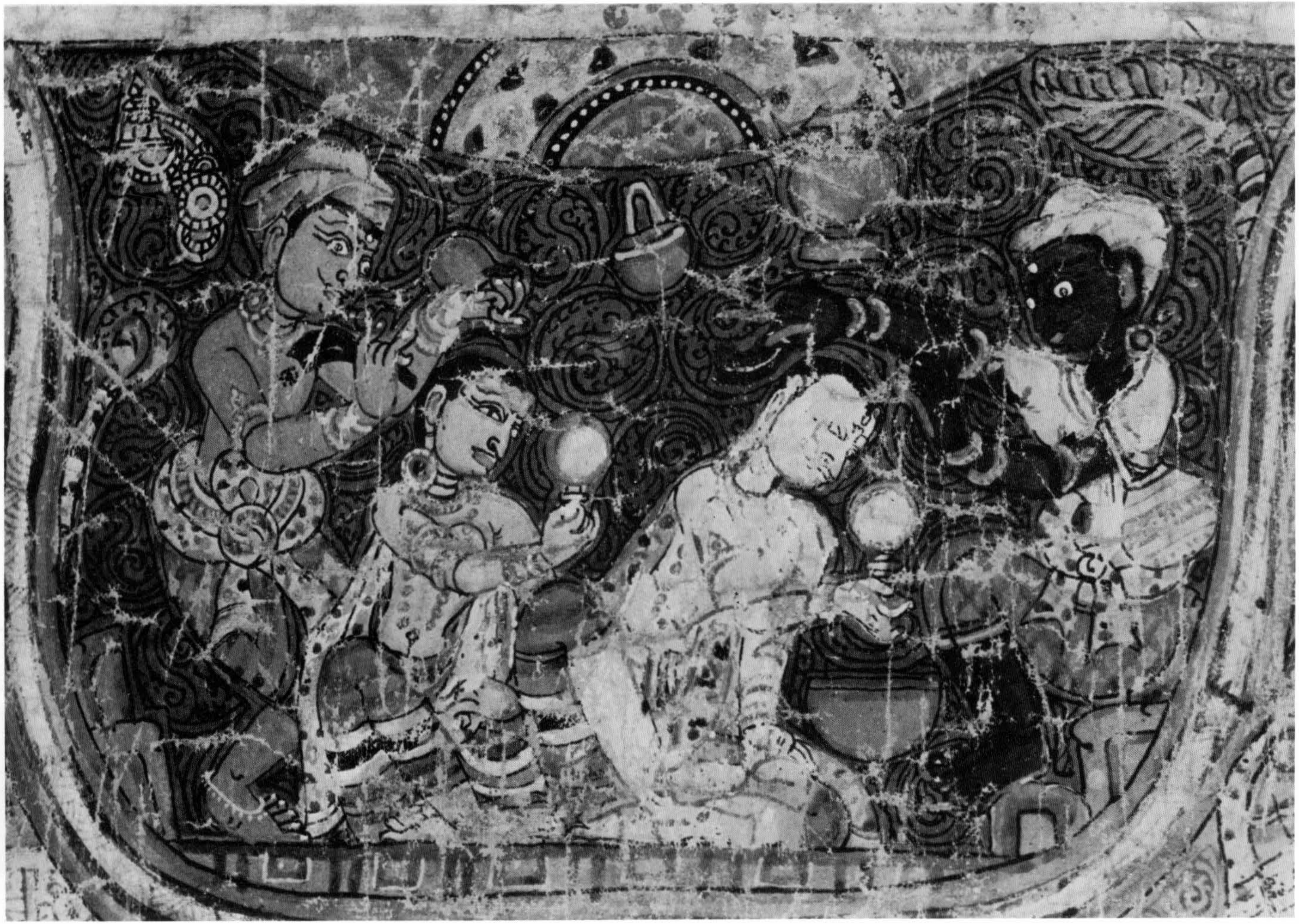
138. Scenes from the *Mahābhārata*, from a kalāpustaka, ca. 1600. University Library, Cambridge.



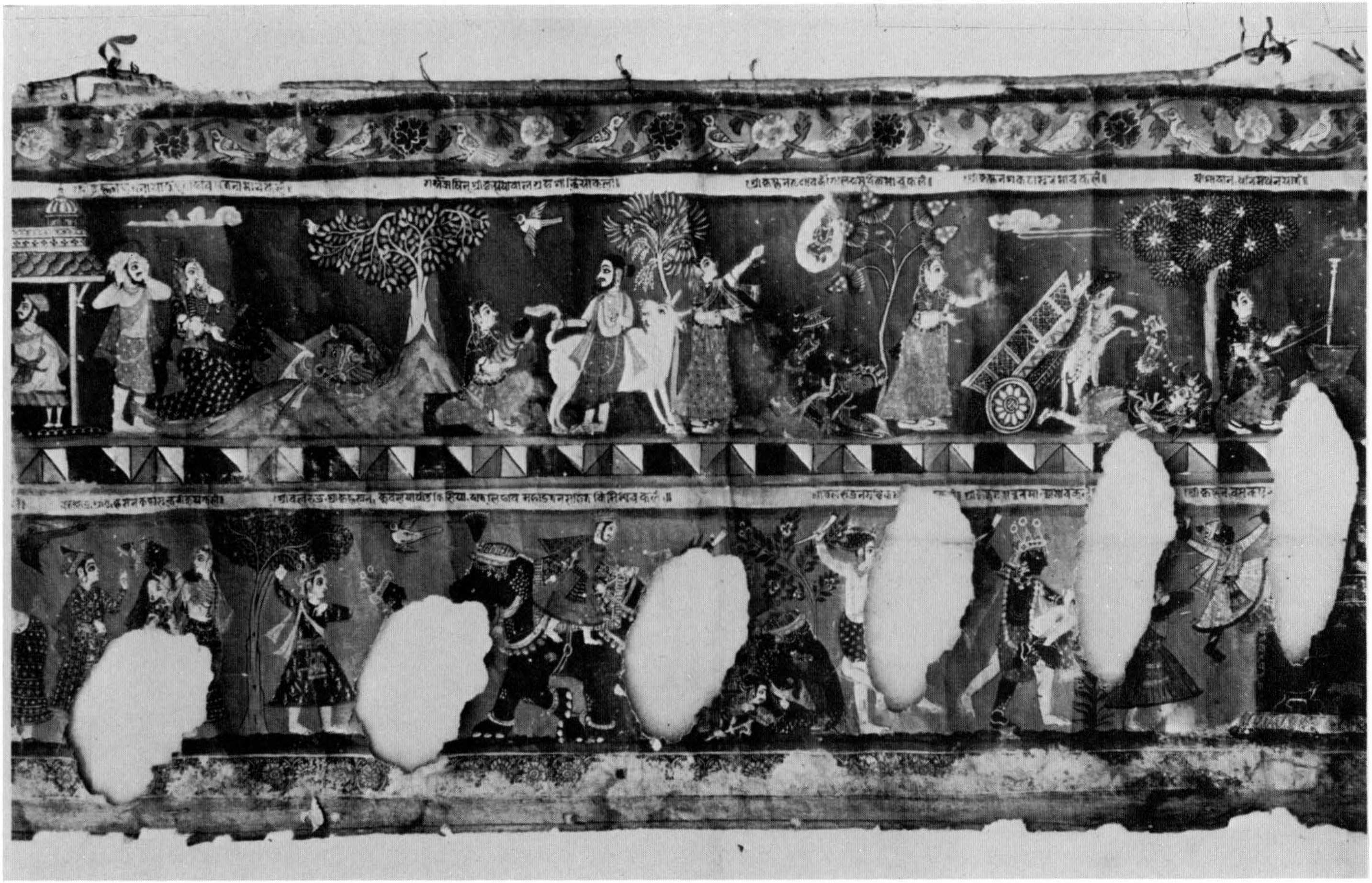
139. Section of a Rathayātrā scroll, 1617, H. 64.2 cm. Prince of Wales Museum, Bombay.



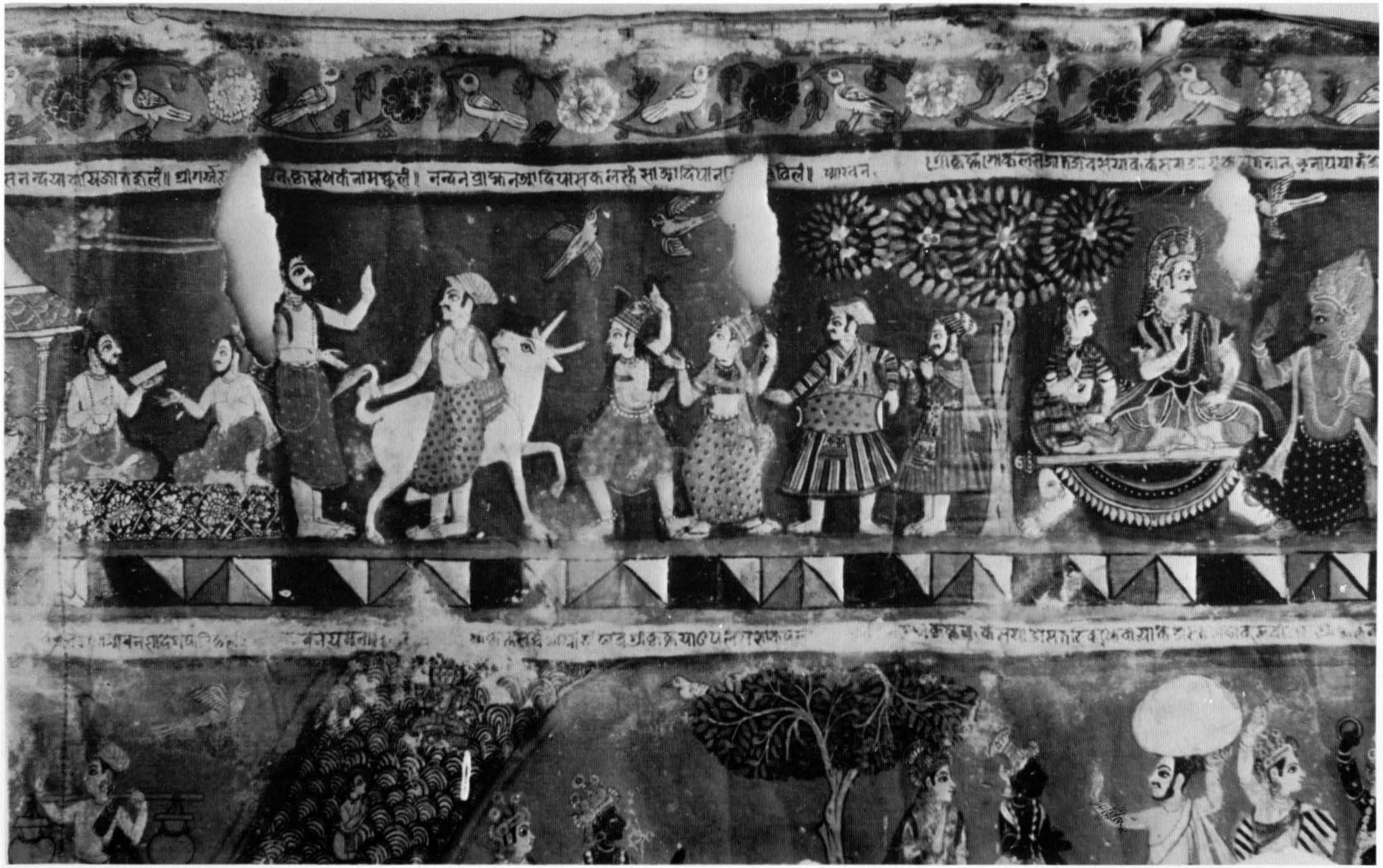
140. Section of a Buddhist scroll, 1600-1625, H. 64.2 cm. Prince of Wales Museum.



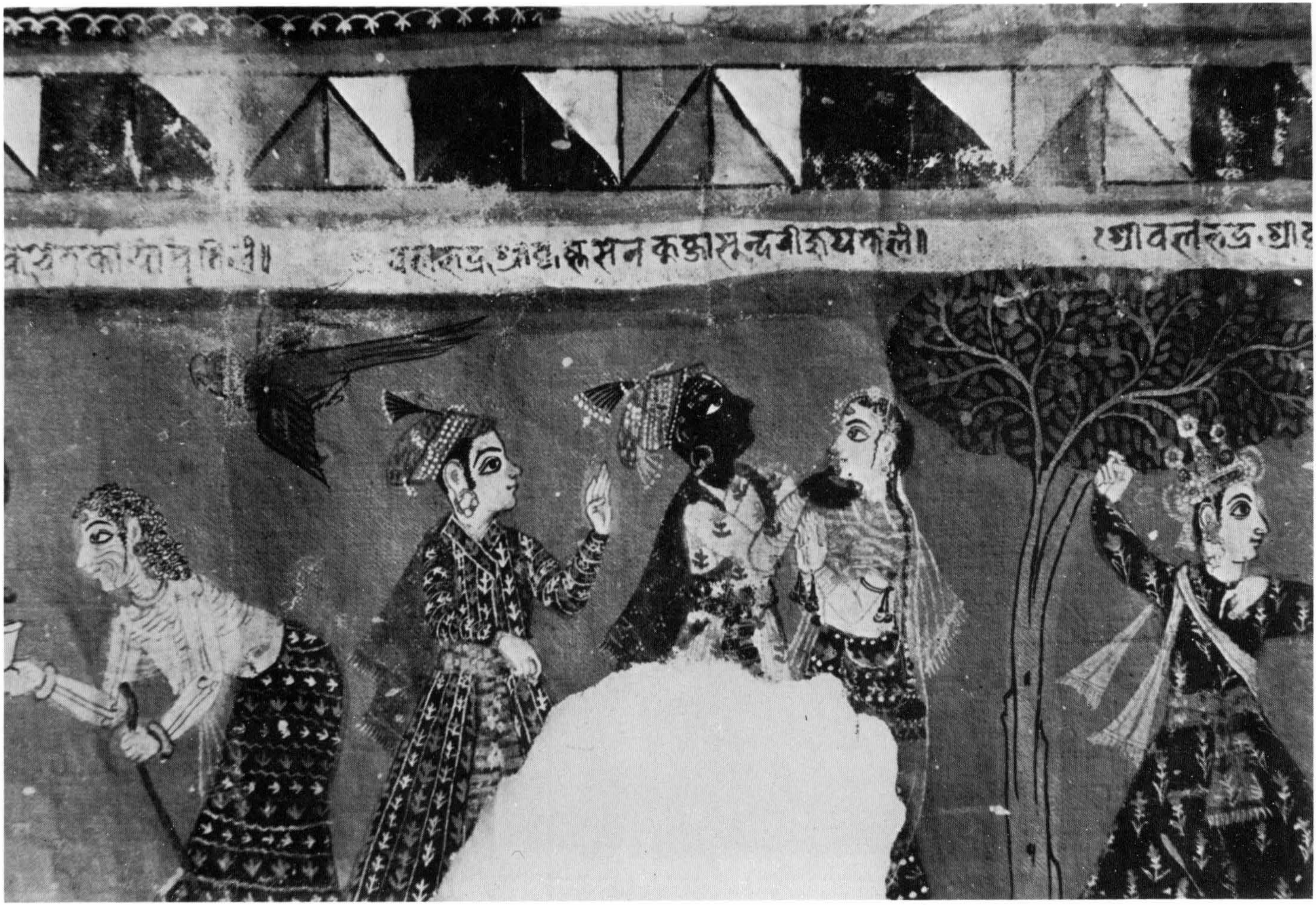
141. Detail from a scroll depicting Lokeśvara legends, 1600-1625. Prince of Wales Museum.



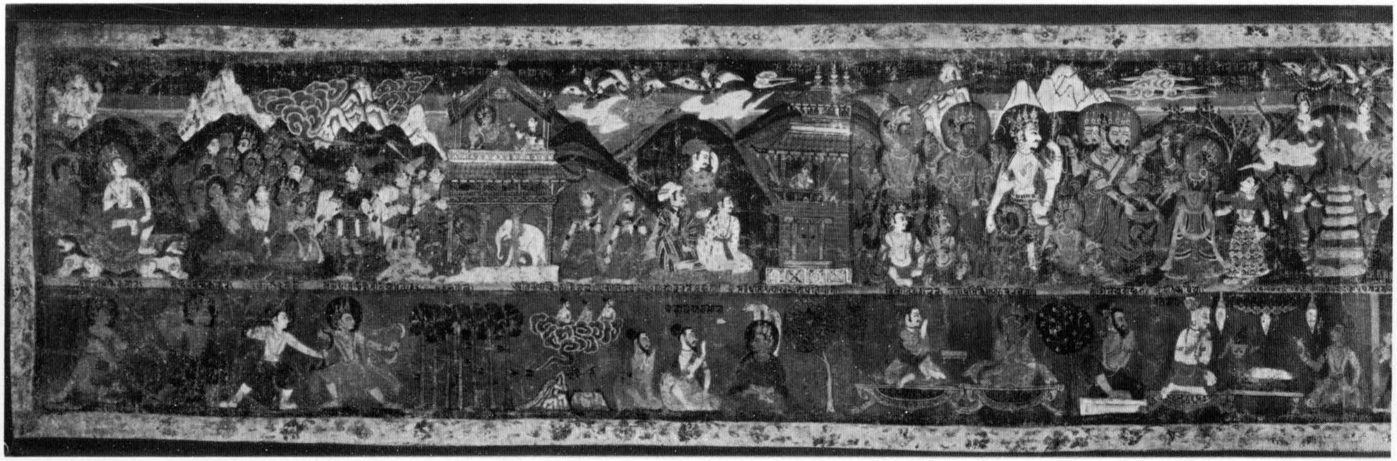
142. Section of Kṛṣṇalīlā scroll, 1692, H. 52 cm., W. 305 cm. Bharat Kala Bhavan.



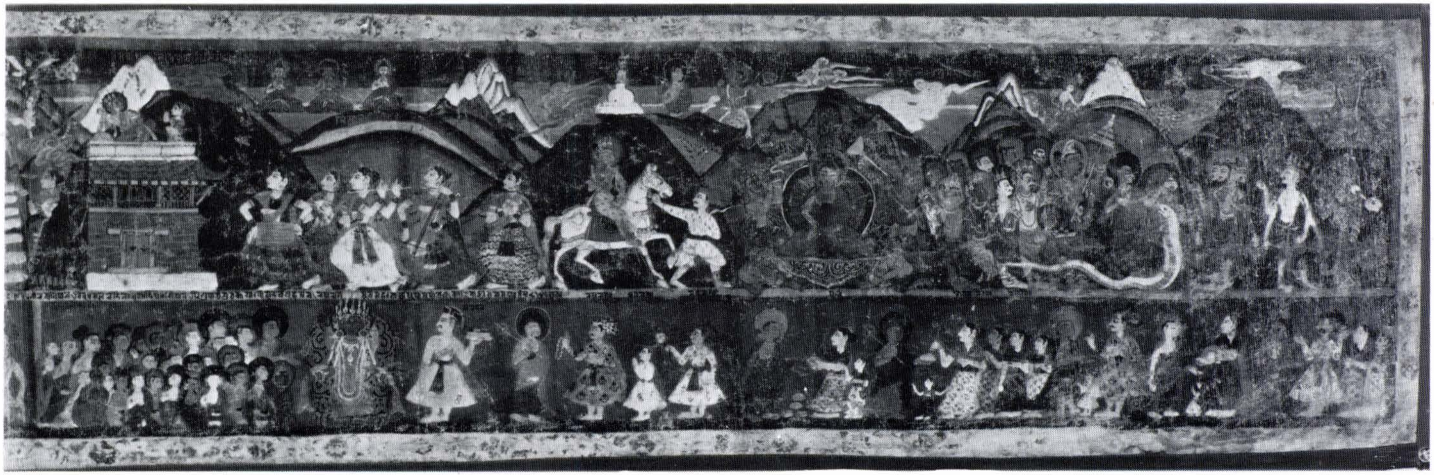
143. Another Section of Fig. 142.



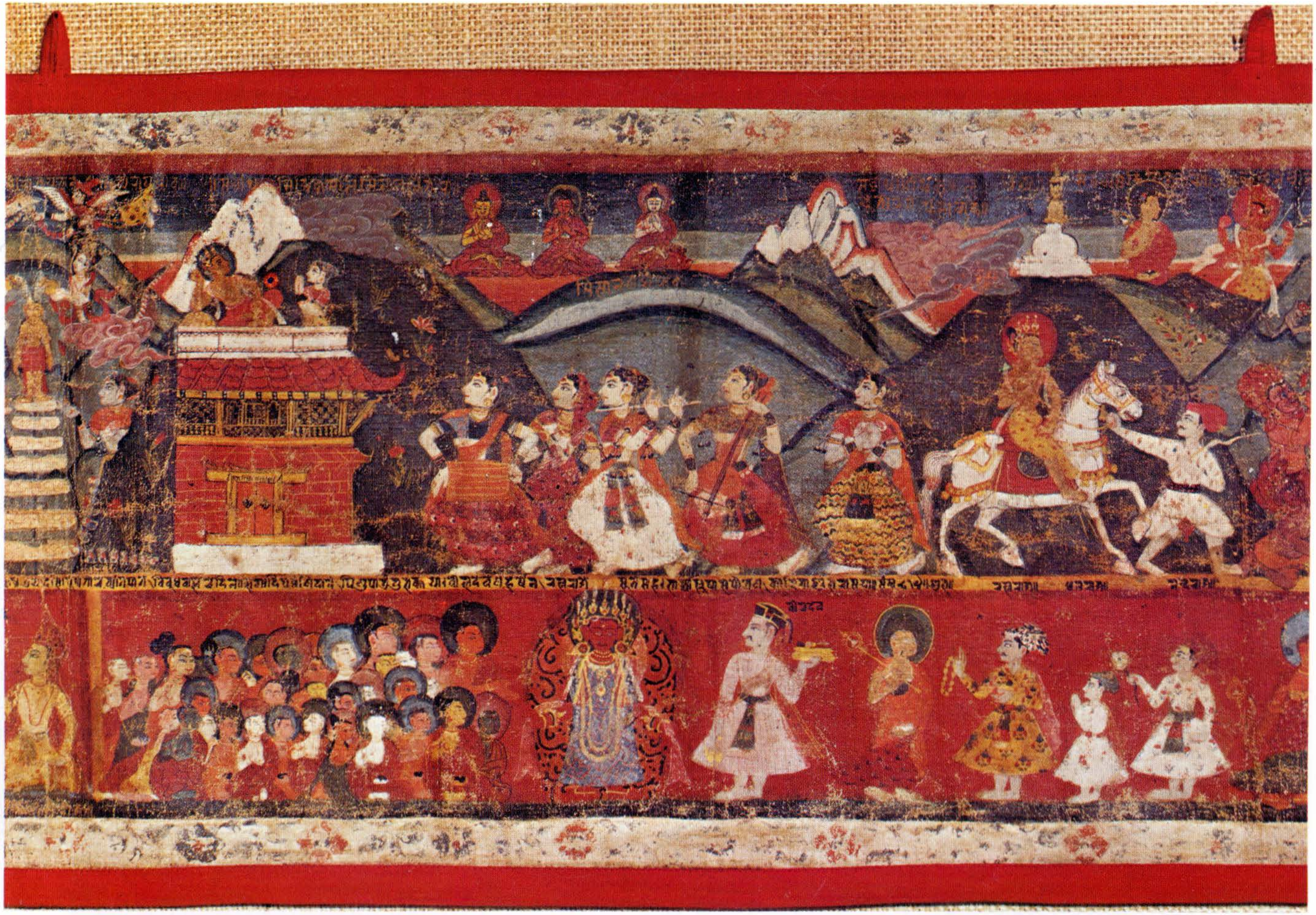
144. Detail of Fig. 142 showing Kṛṣṇa turning Kubjā beautiful.



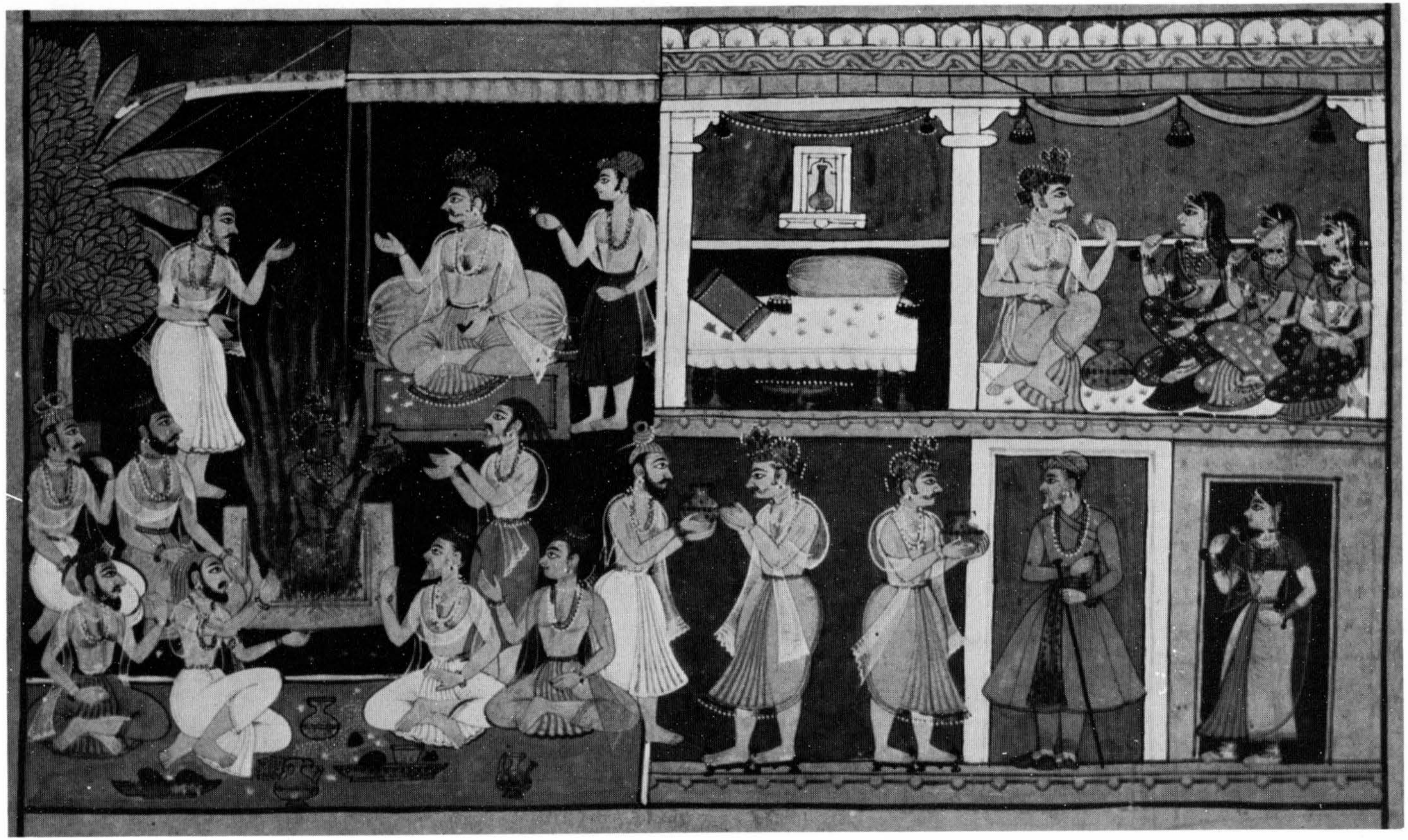
145. Section of scroll depicting Buddha's Life, 1694, H. 29.7 cm., W. 82.5 cm. Doris Wiener Gallery.



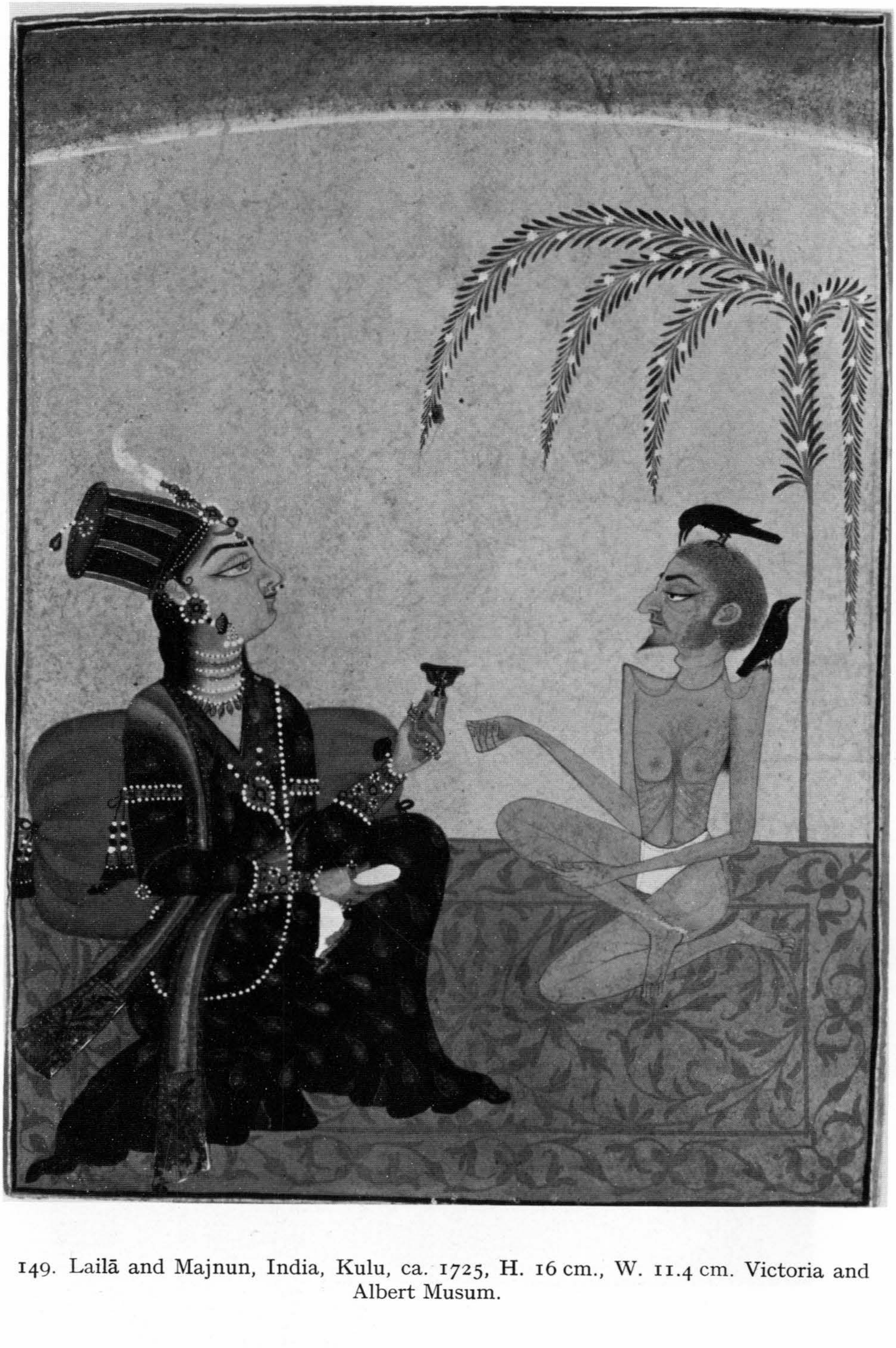
146. Another Section of scroll in Fig. 145.



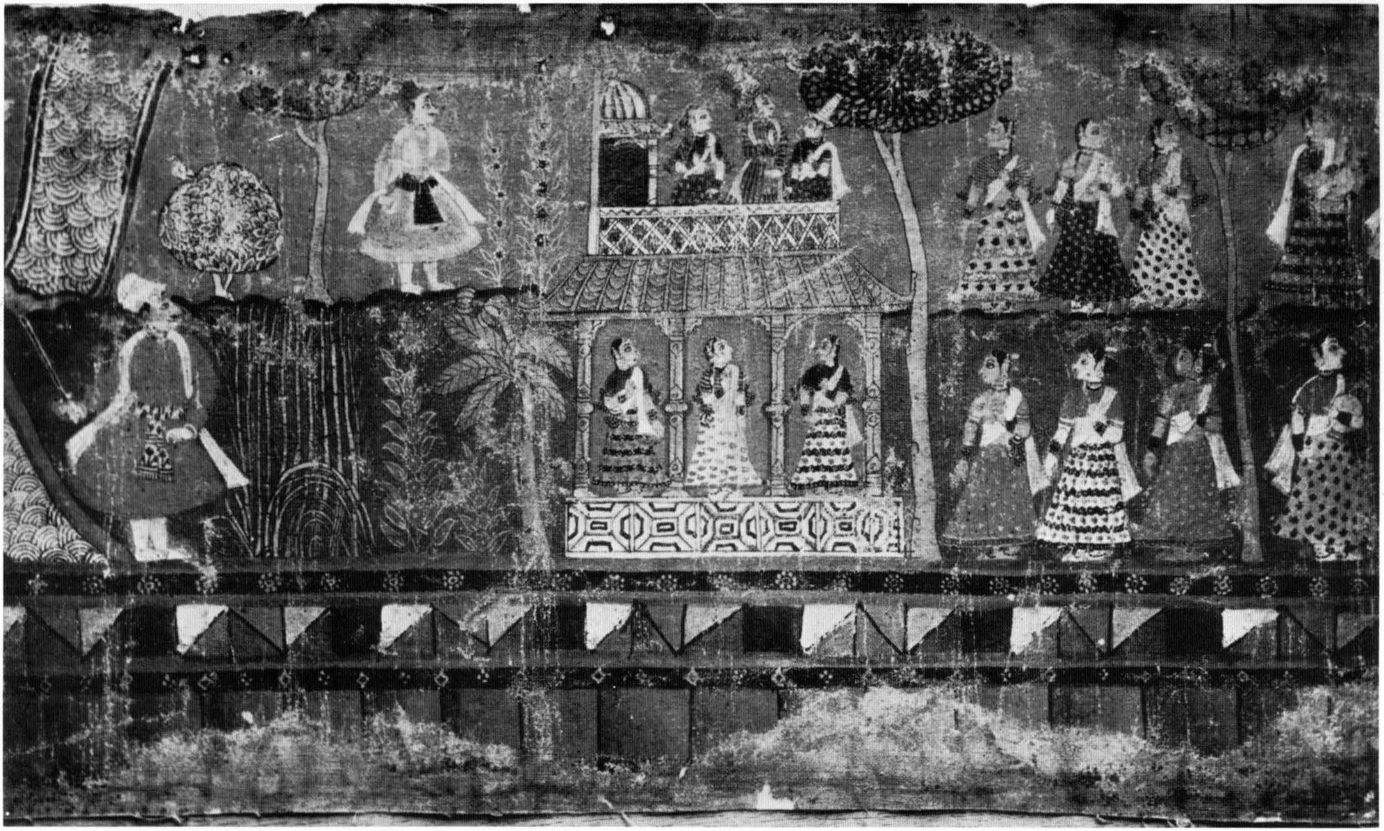
147. Detail of Fig. 146.



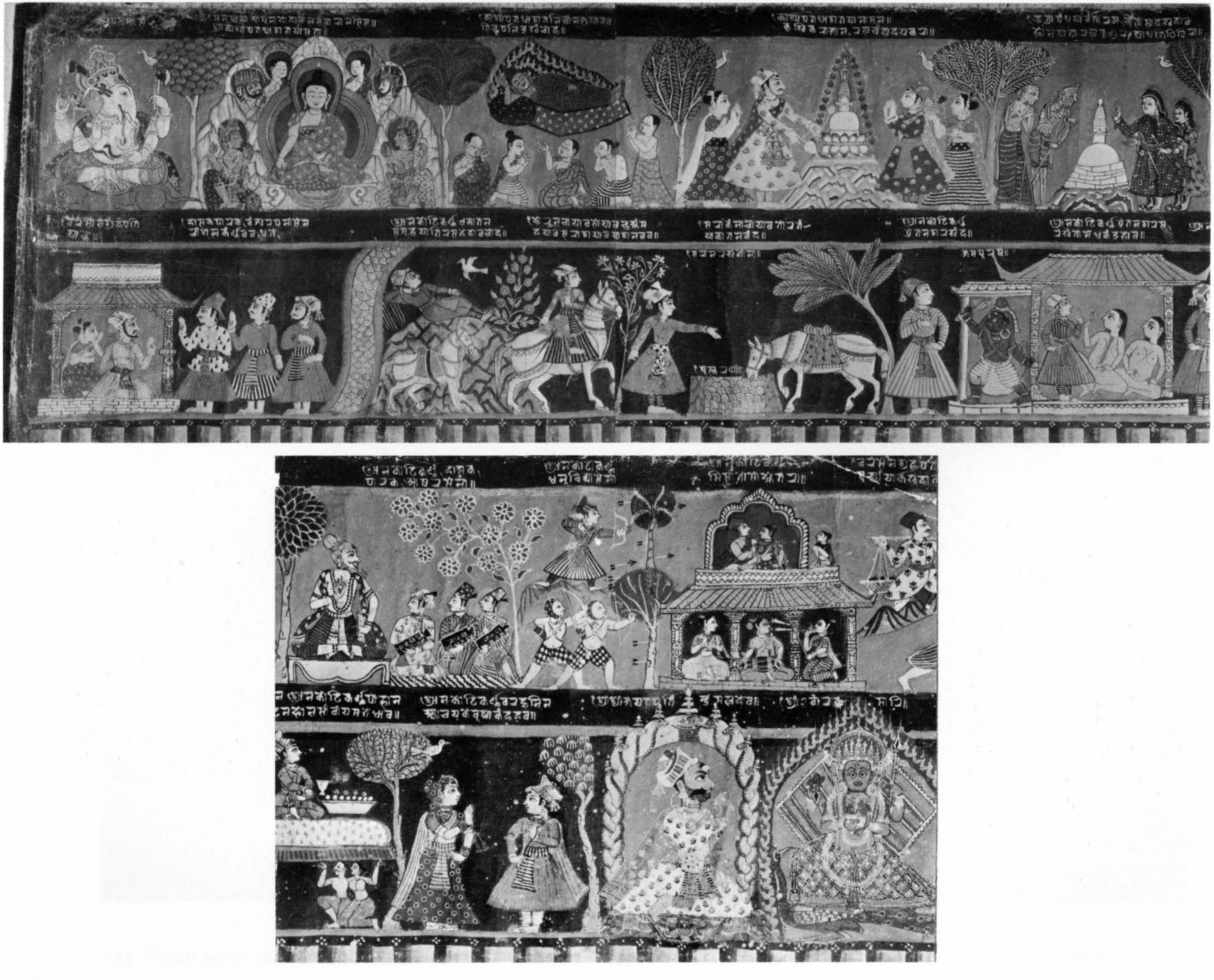
148. Illustration from a *Rāmāyaṇa*, India, Mewar, 1649, H. 22.8 cm., W. 38.1 cm. Prince of Wales Museum.



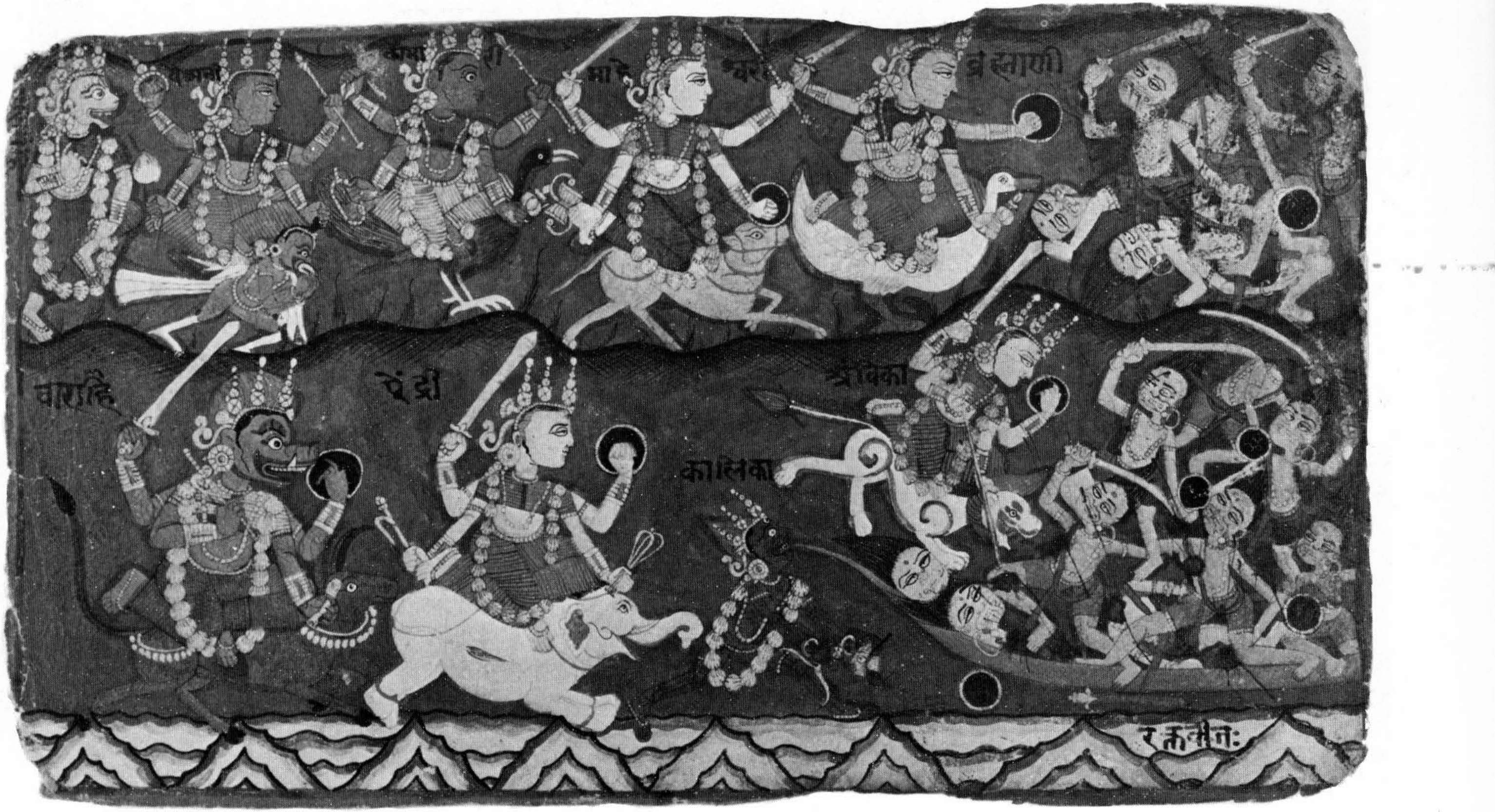
149. Lailā and Majnun, India, Kulu, ca. 1725, H. 16 cm., W. 11.4 cm. Victoria and Albert Musum.



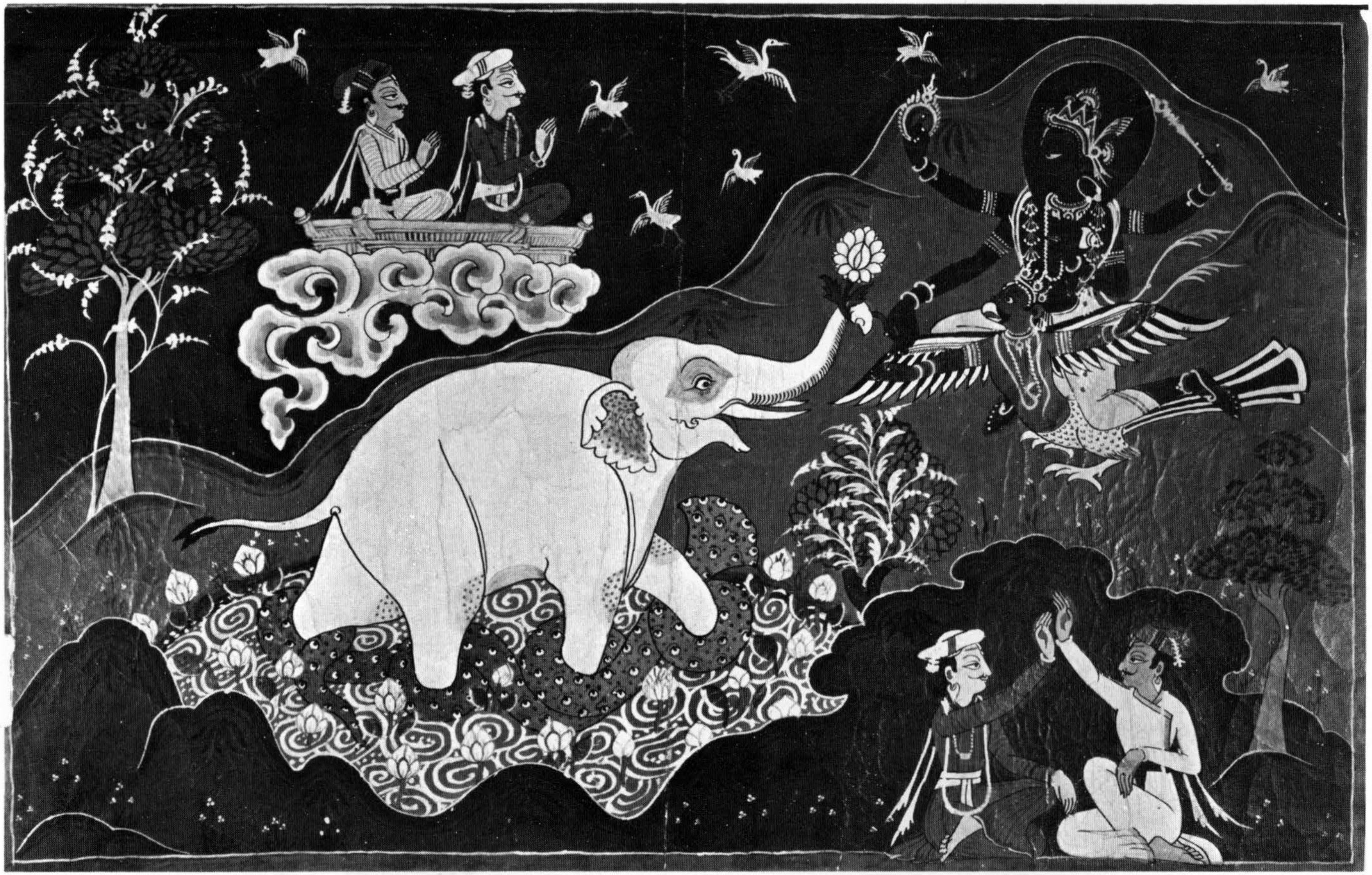
150. Section from a Kinnarī Jātaka scroll, ca. 1725, H. 40 cm., W. 385 cm. Prince of Wales Museum.



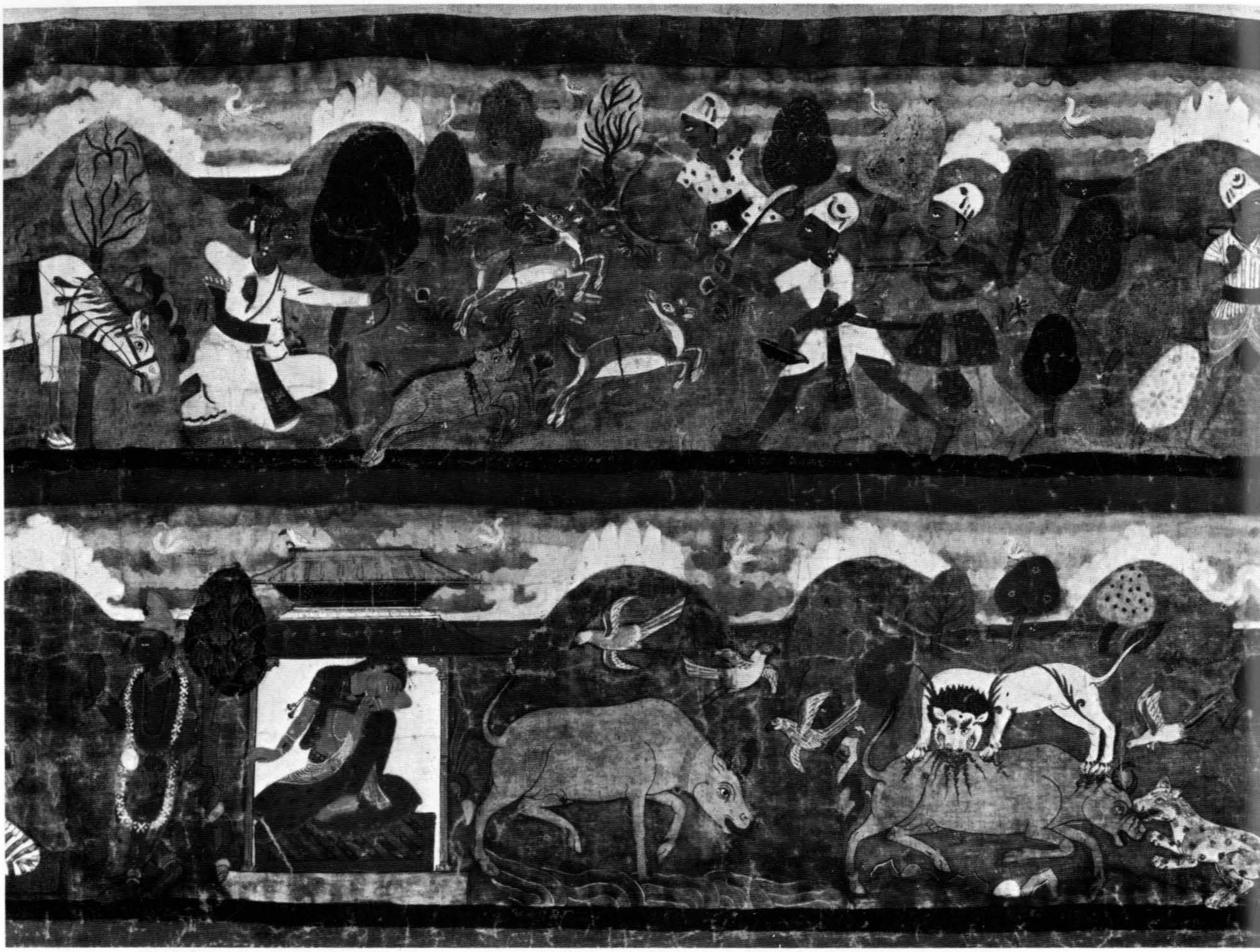
151. Scroll depicting story of Śroṇakoṭikarṇa, 1721 or earlier, H. 38 cm., W. 471 cm. The National Museum, New Delhi.


ब्रह्माणी
बाराहि
ऐंद्री
कालिका
रक्तबीजः

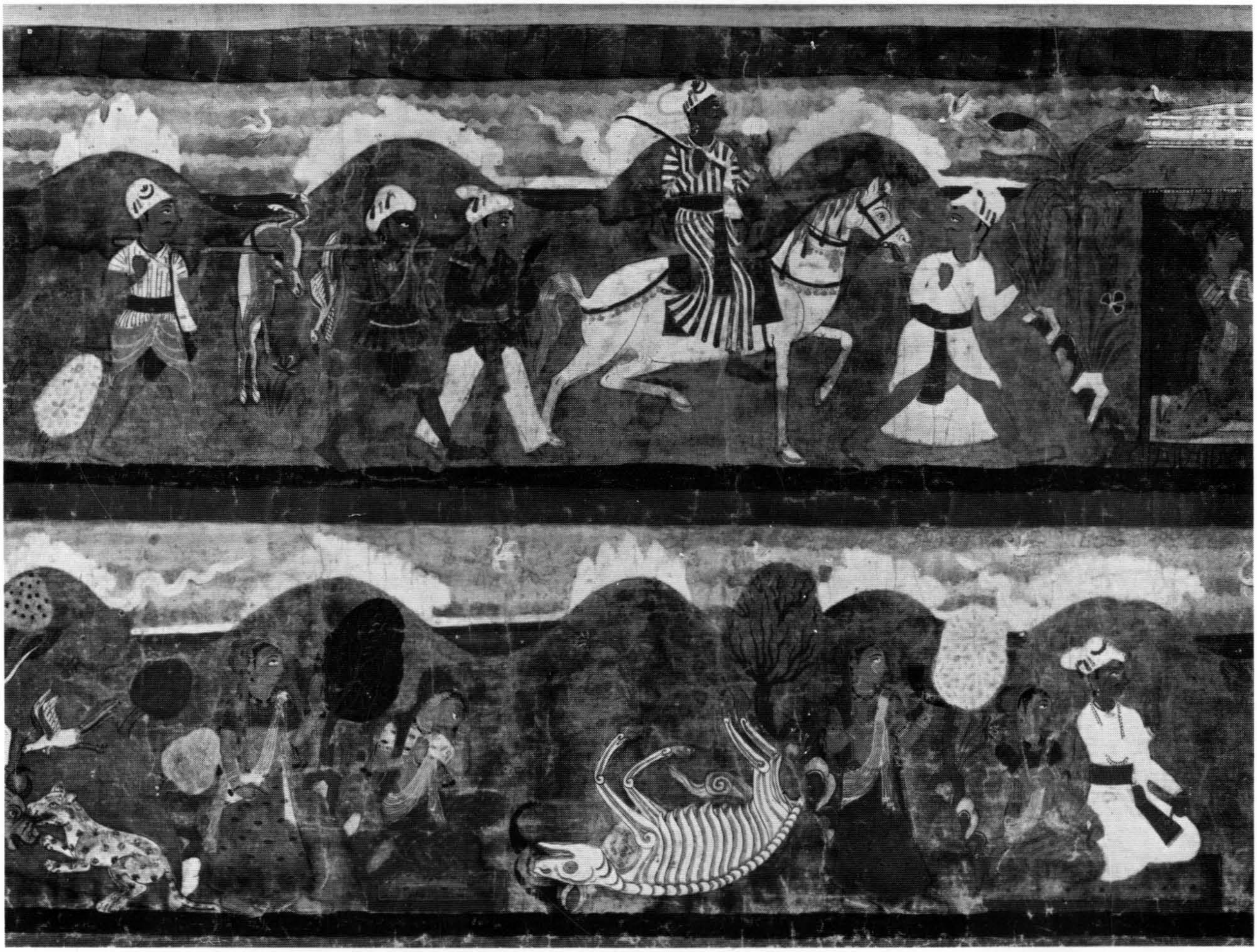
152. Illustration from a *Devīmāhātmya*, ca. 1700, H. 11.4 cm. Los Angeles County Museum of Art, Gift of Paul Walter.



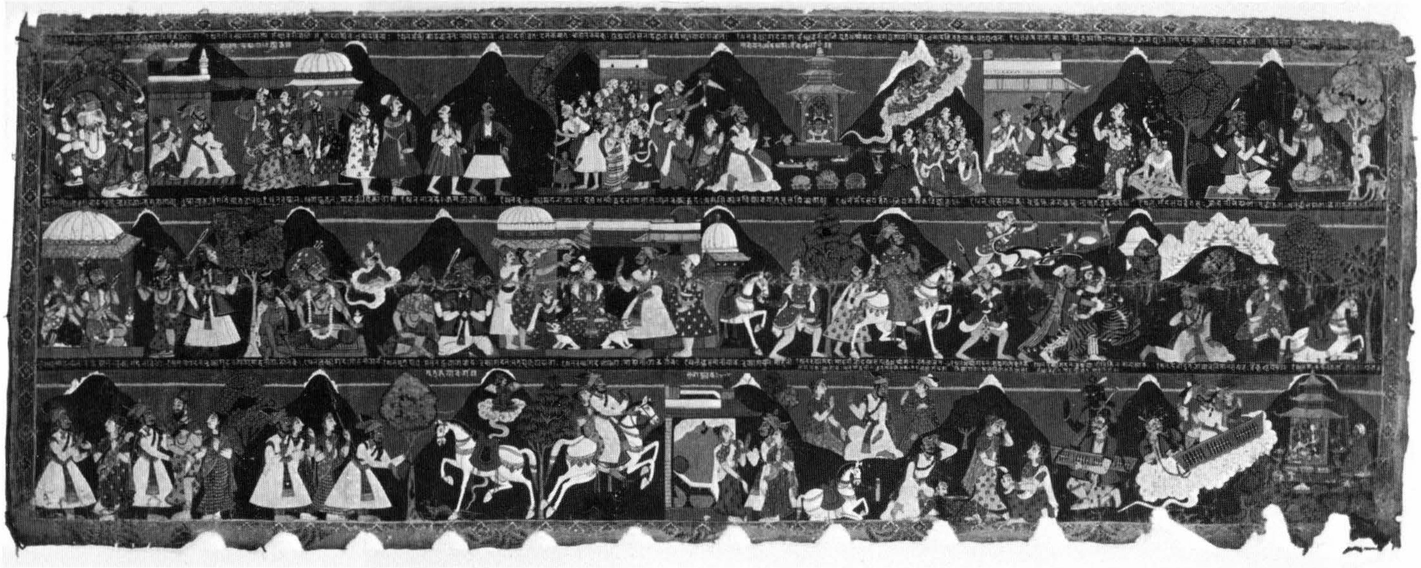
153. Viṣṇu saves the elephant king, from a *Bhāgavata Purāṇa,* ca. 1750, H. 34.3 cm., W. 53.4 cm. The Royal Asiatic Society, London.



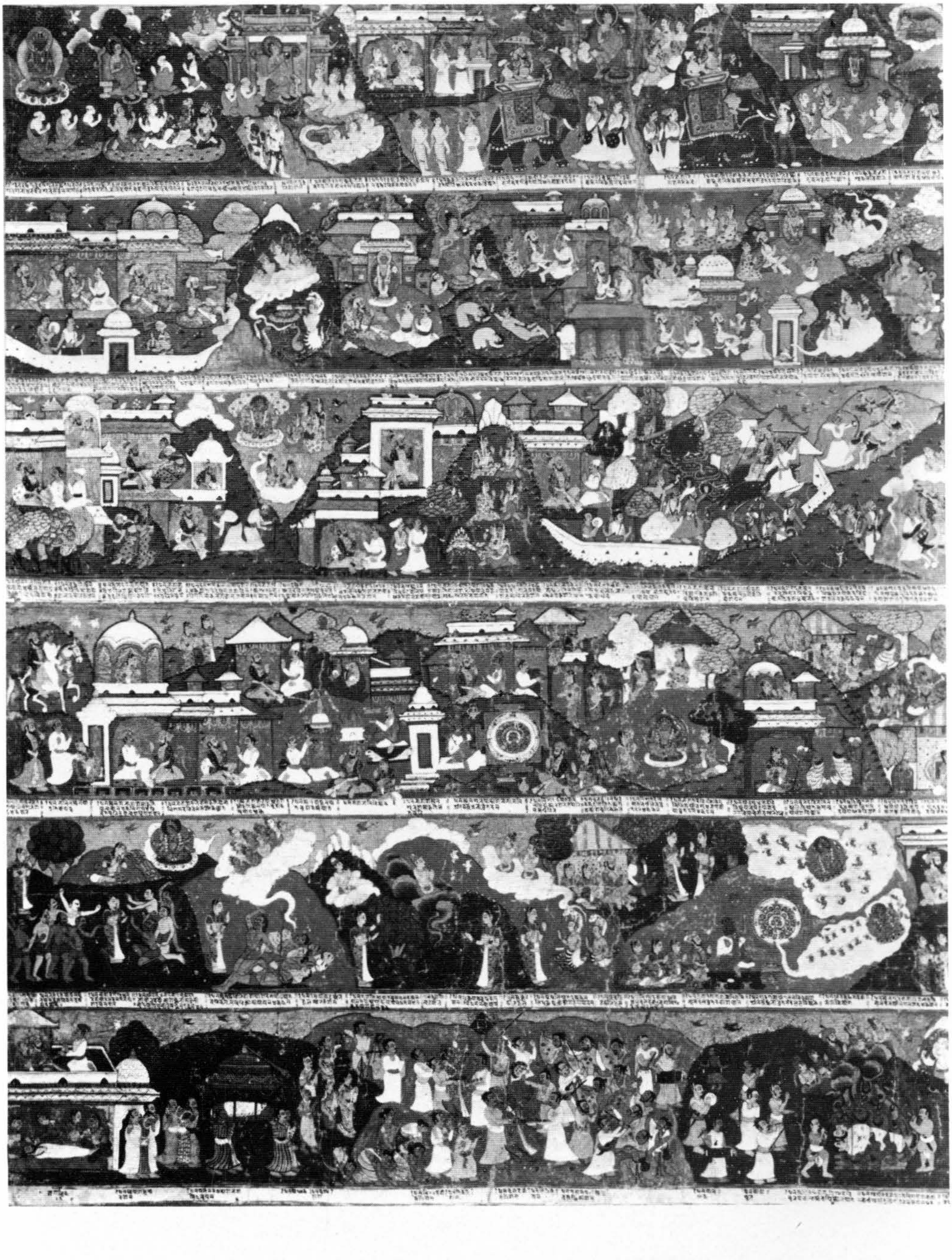
154. Section of a scroll depicting Śriṅgaverī Avadāna, ca. 1775-1800, H. 64.8 cm., W. 9 m. 30.2 cm. Los Angeles County Museum of Art, County Purchase and Gift of Mrs. Joan Palevsky.



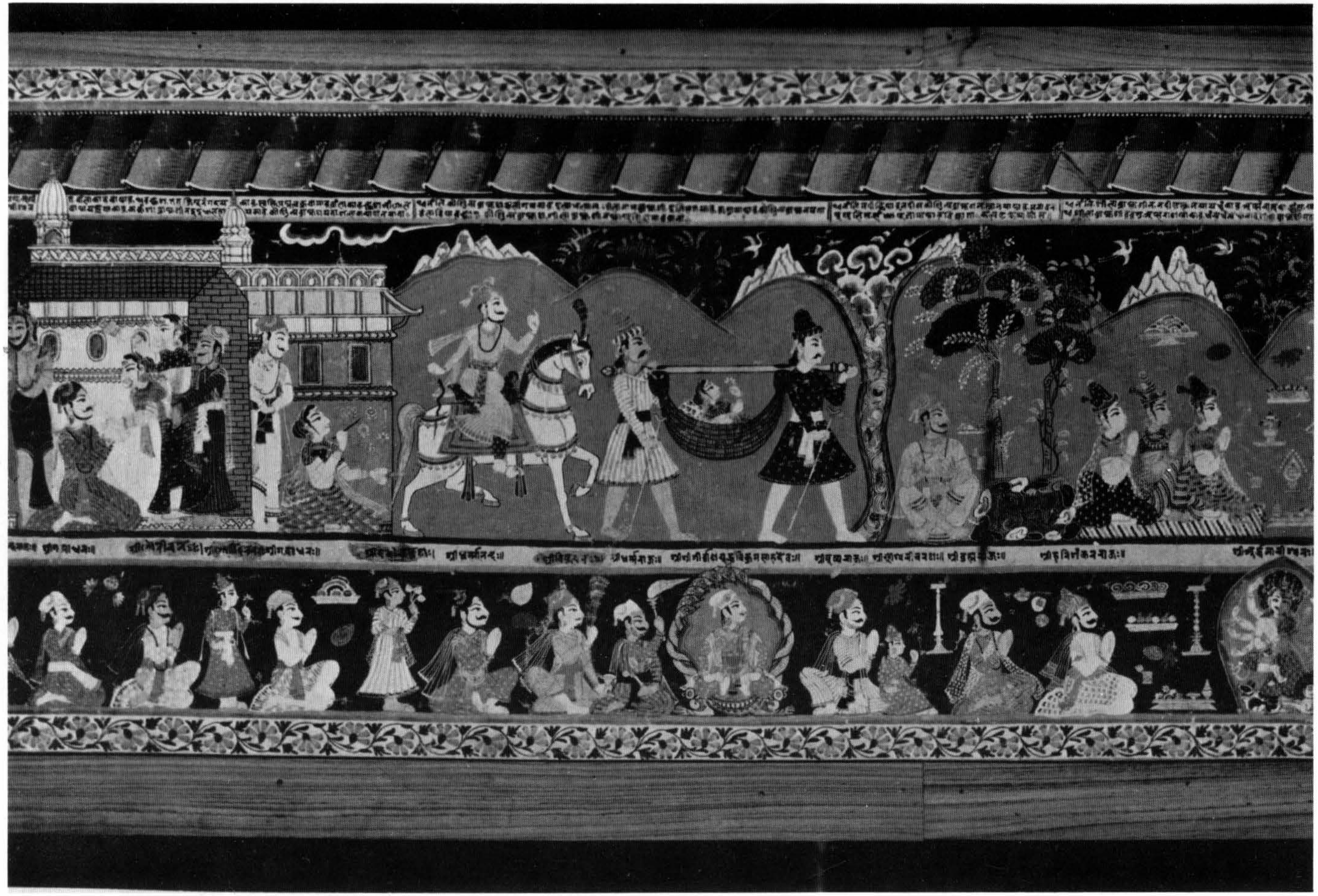
155. Another section of scroll in Fig. 154.



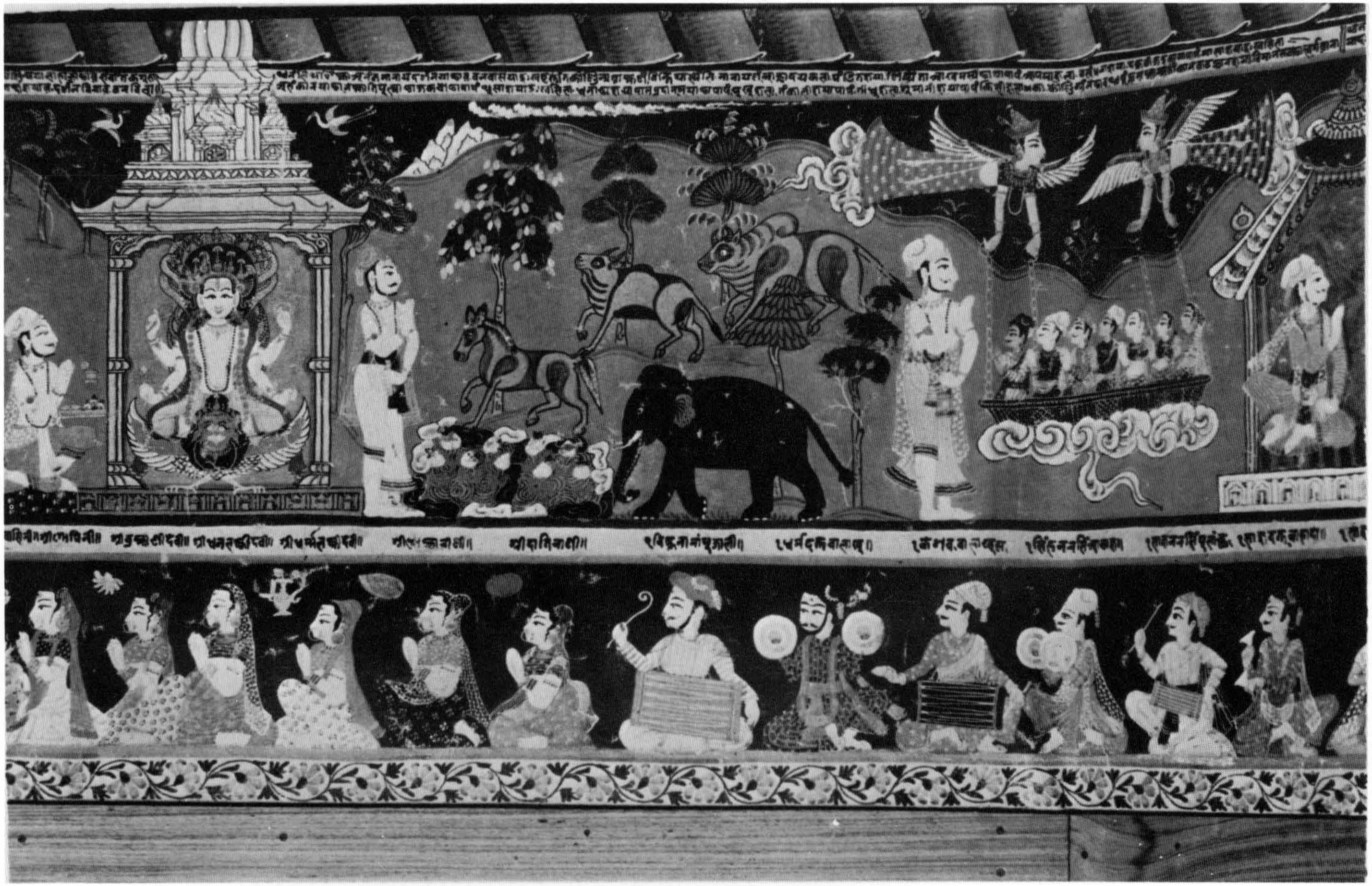
156. Story extolling *Ekādaśīvrata*, ca. 1800, H. 48.2 cm., W. 132.1 cm. Zimmerman Collection.



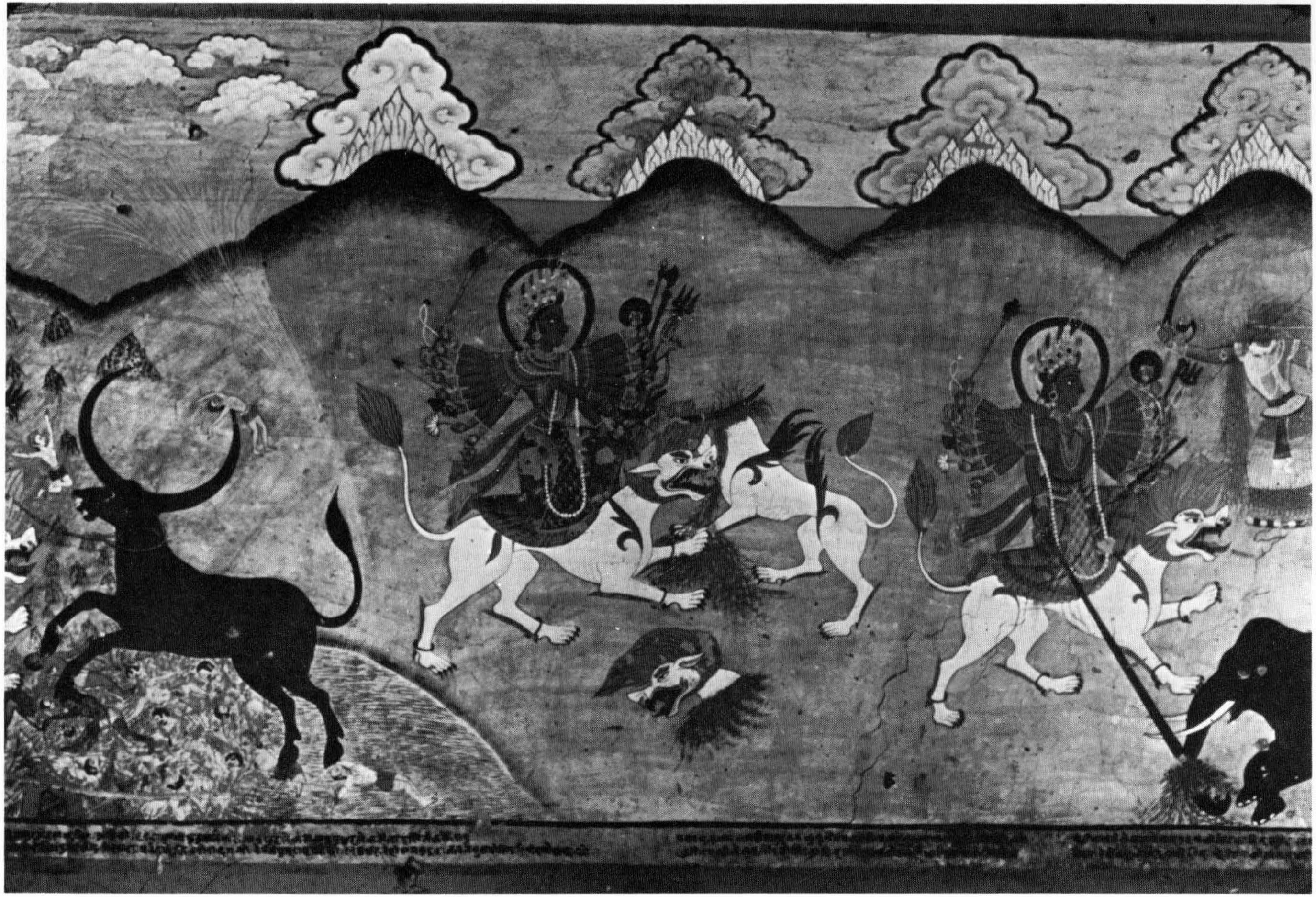
157. Stories extolling Aṣṭamīvrata and Vasudhārāvrata, 1805, H. 2 m. 87 cm., W. 2 m. 90 cm. David Tremayne, Ltd.



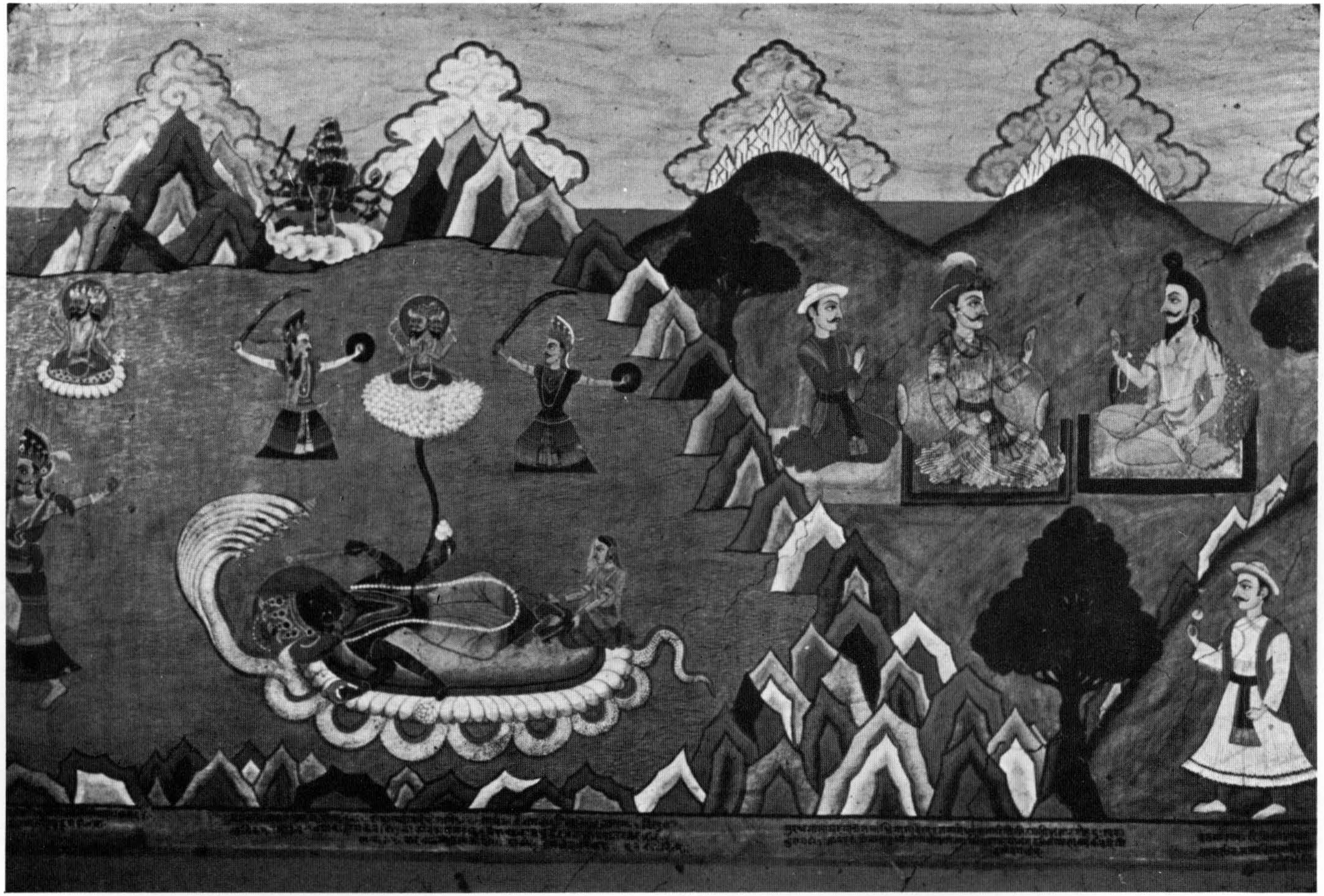
158. Section of a scroll depicting story extolling Anantavrata, ca. 1800, H. 60.2 cm., W. 8 m. 20 cm. Bharat Kala Bhavan.



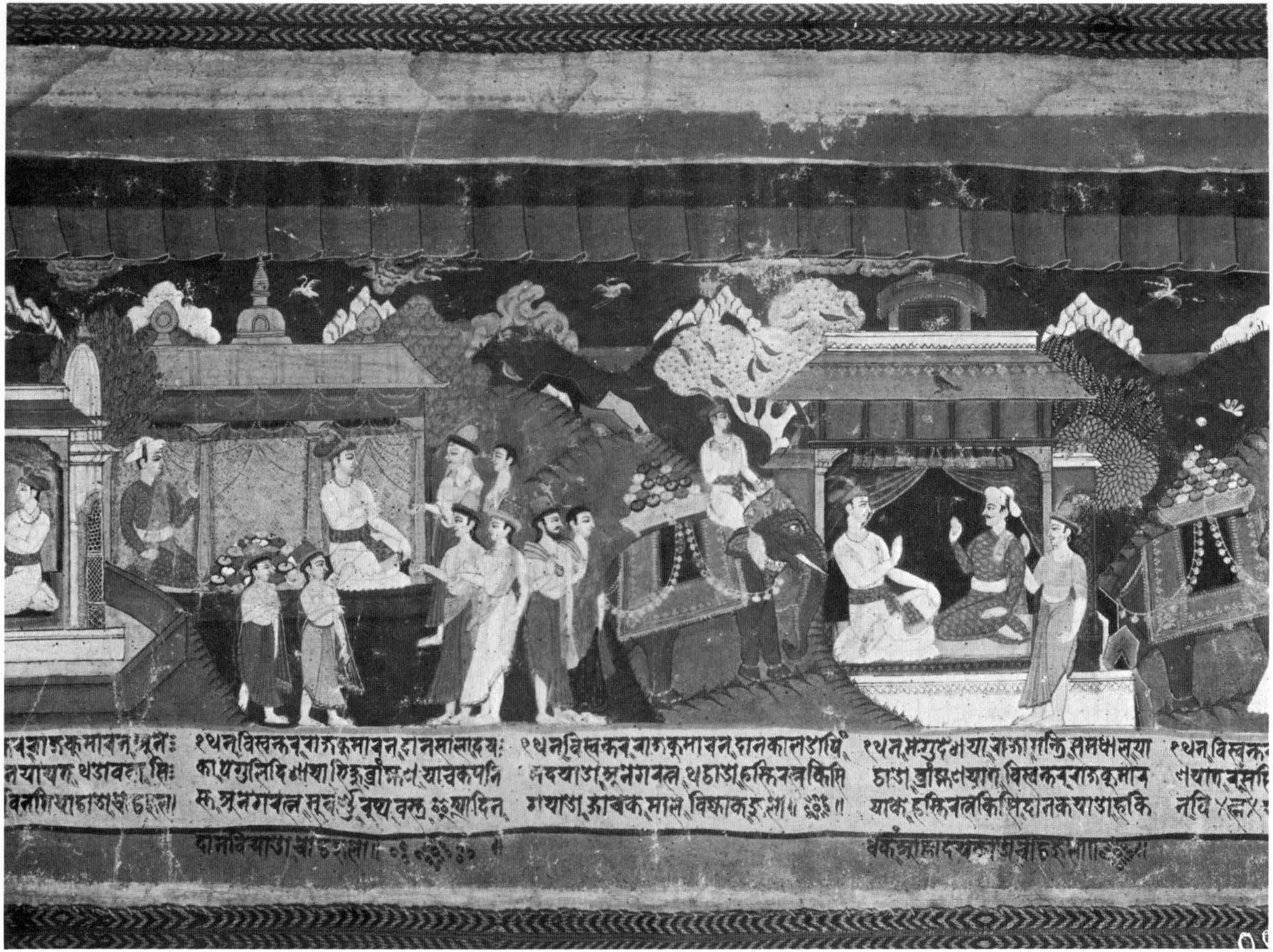
159. Another section of scroll in Fig. 158.



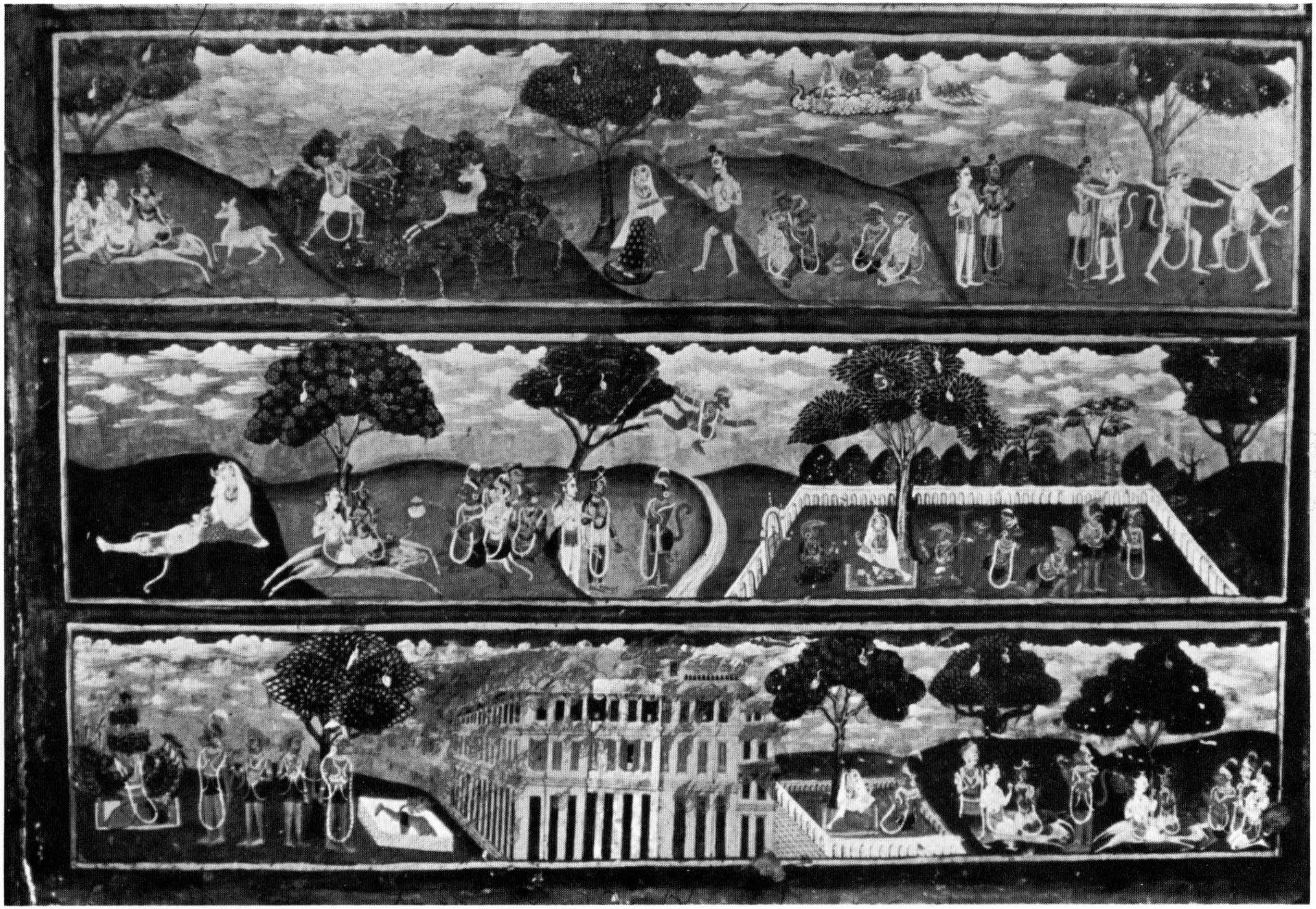
160. Murals depicting the *Devīmāhātmya*, ca. 1835, Hanumandhoka Palace, Kathmandu.



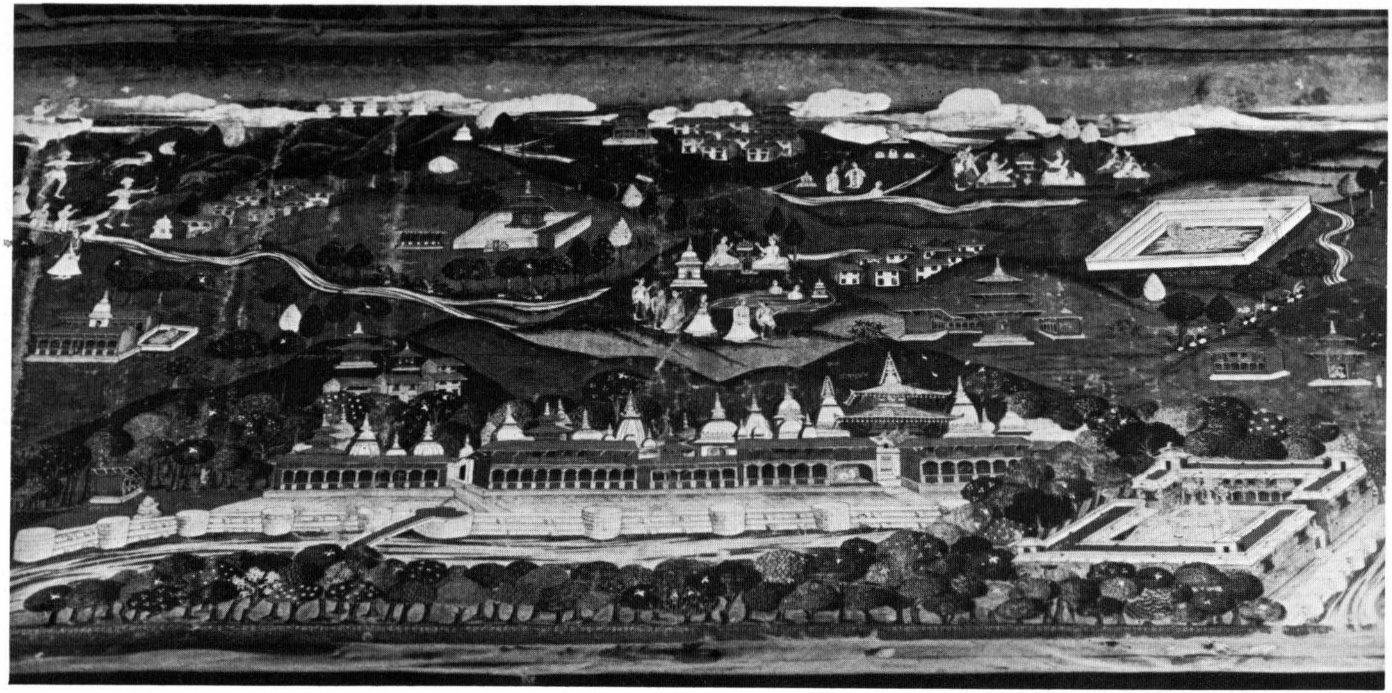
161. Another section of mural in Fig. 160.



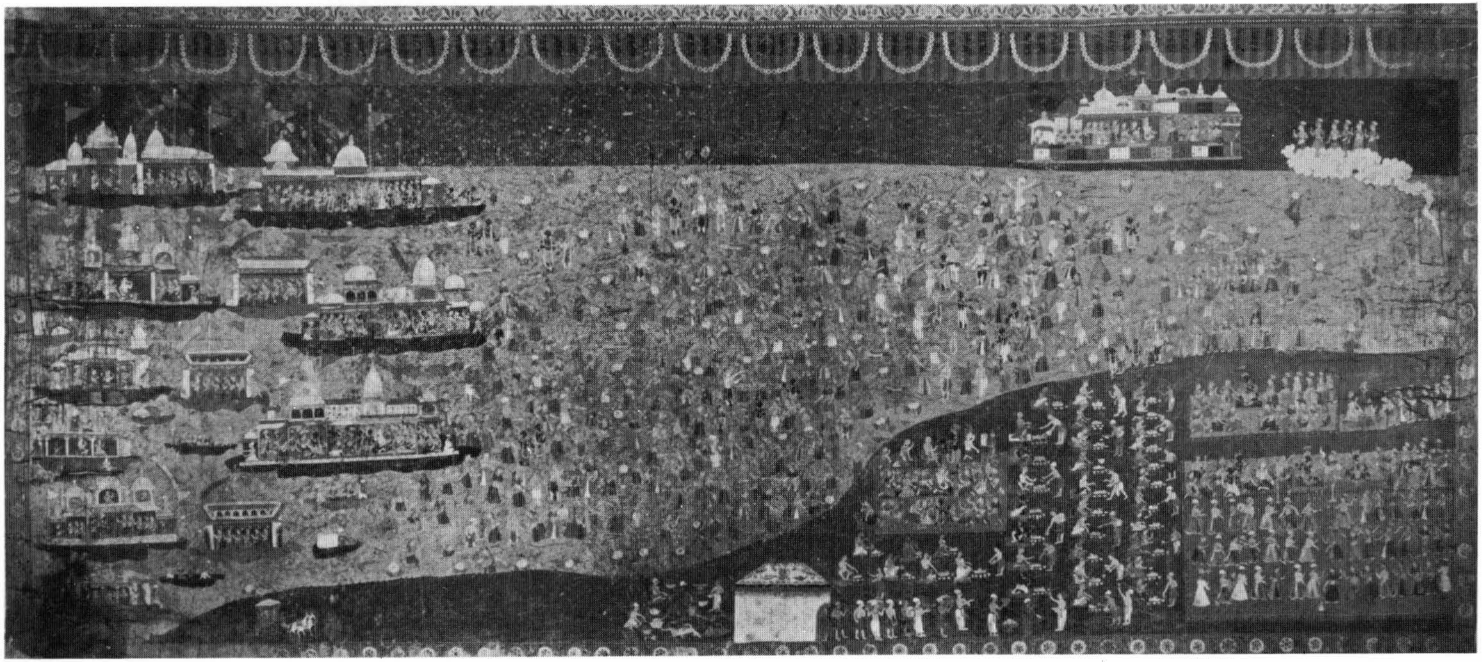
162. Section of a scroll depicting Vessantara Jātaka, 1837, H. 38 cm., W. 74.5 cm. Museum für Indische Kunst, Berlin.



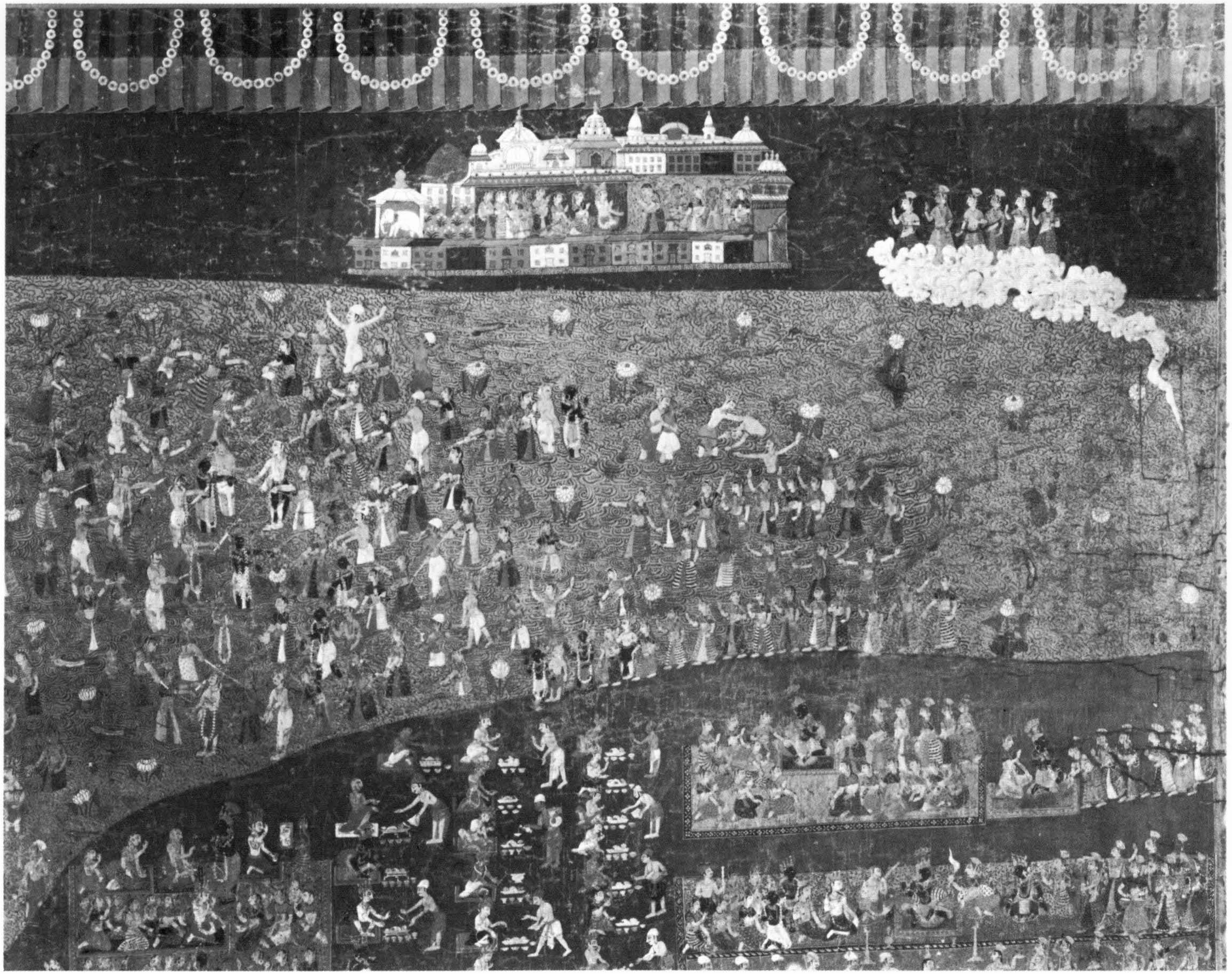
163. Murals depicting stories from the *Rāmāyaṇa,* ca. 1850. Hanumandhoka Palace, Kathmandu.



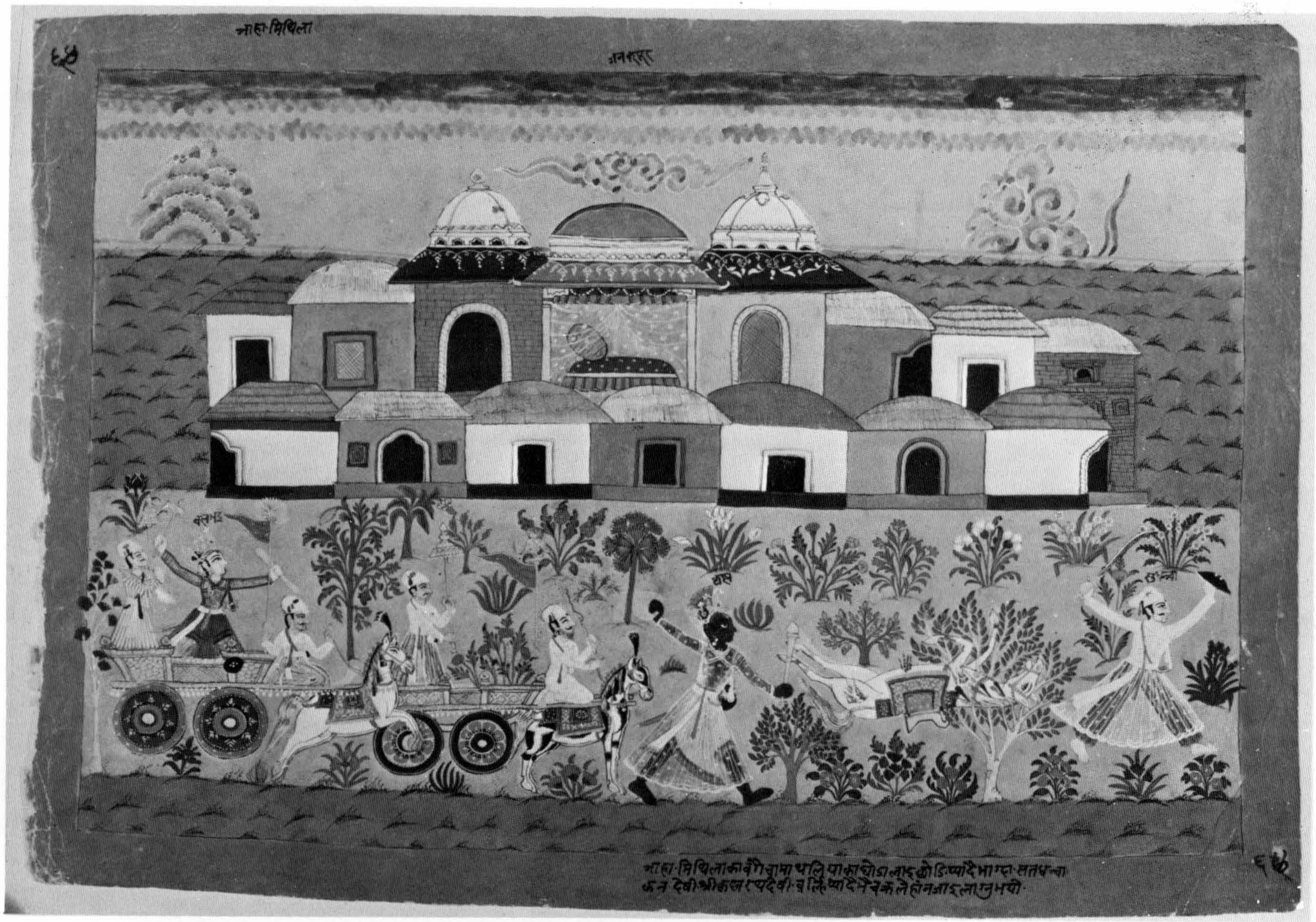
164. View of Kathmandu Valley, Scroll, ca. 1850. Kwa Bahal, Patan.



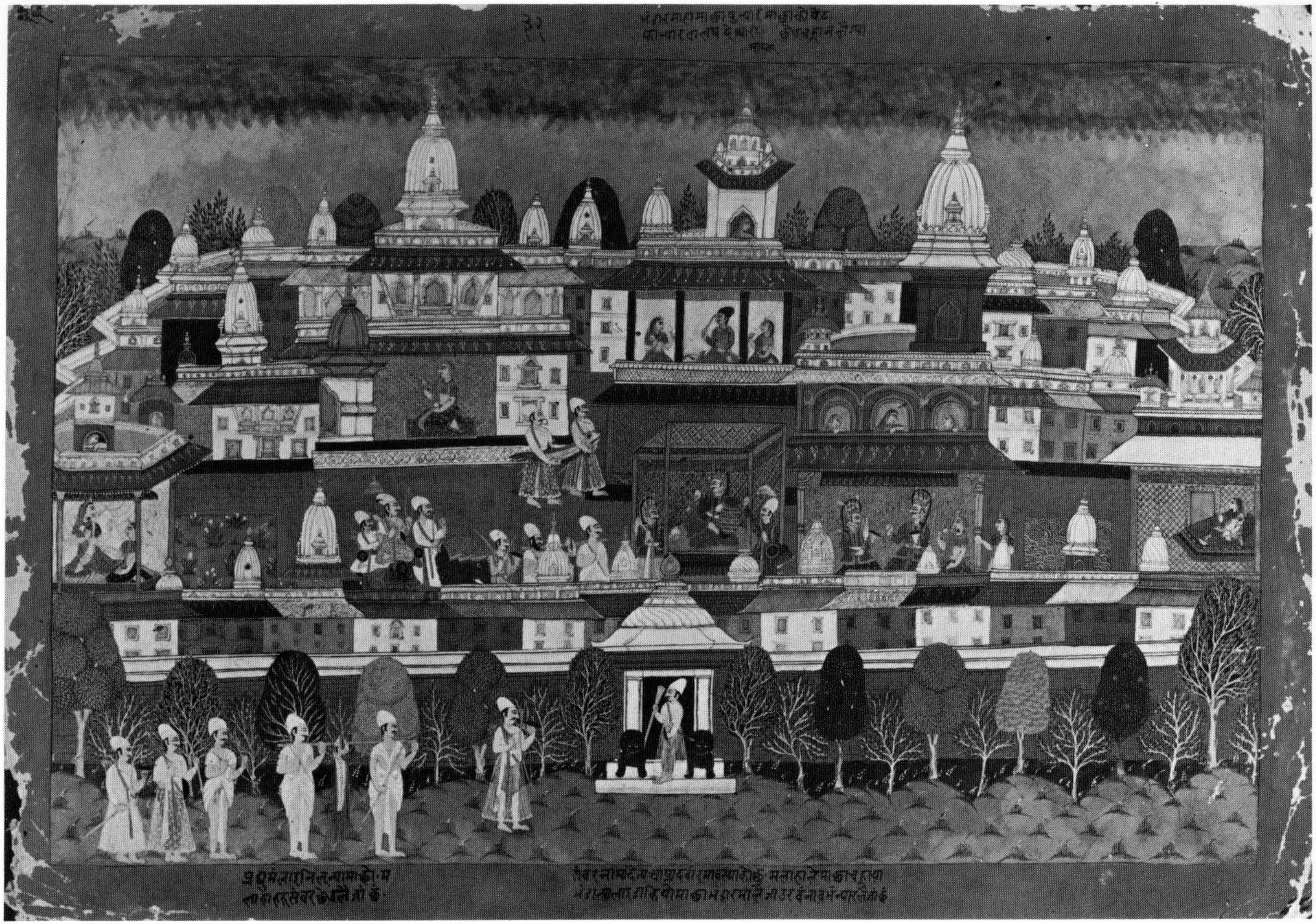
165. Festival in the River, Painting on cloth, ca. 1800, H. 2 m. 62 cm., W. 3 m. 5 cm. David Tremayne, Ltd.



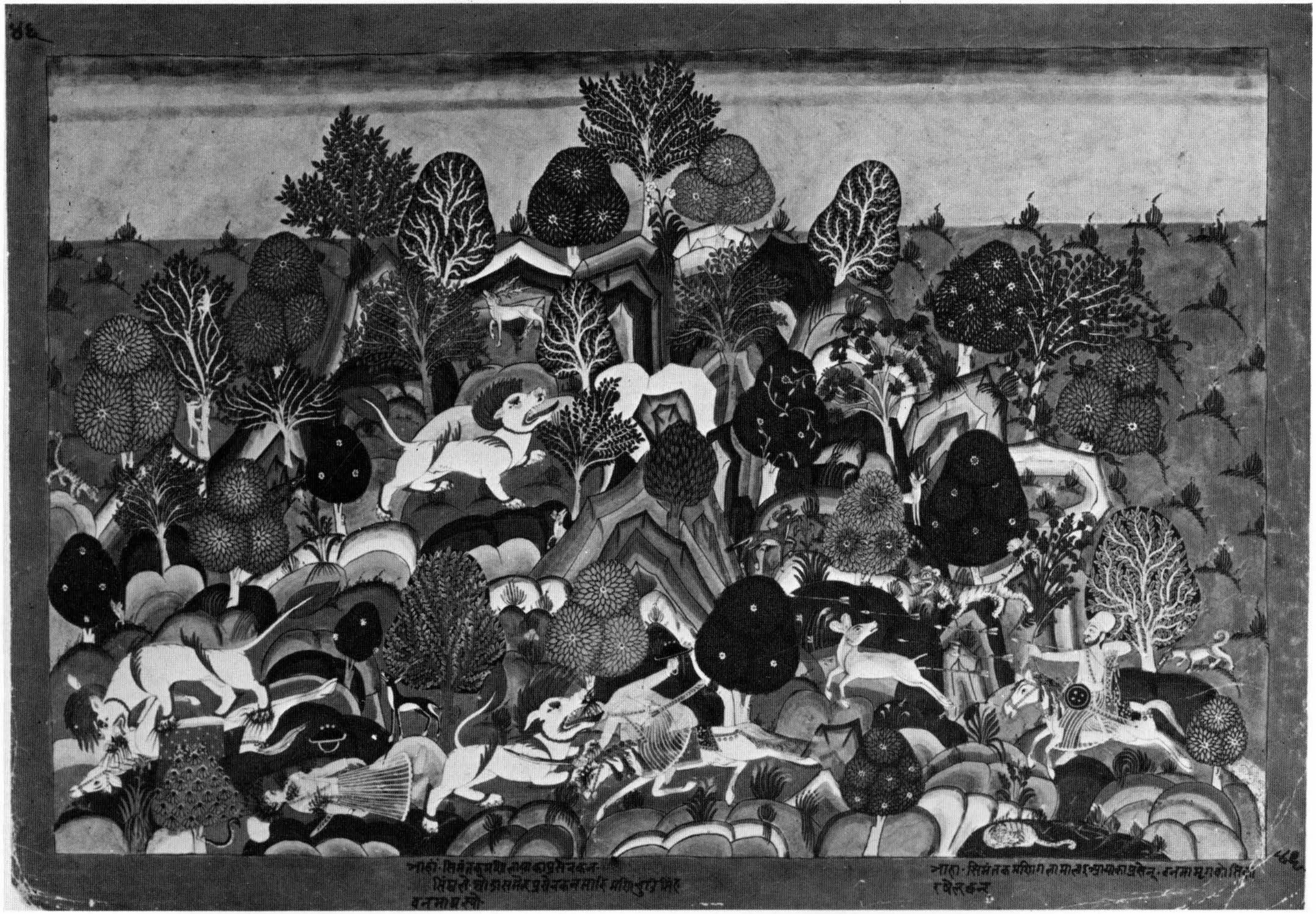
166. Detail of Fig. 165.



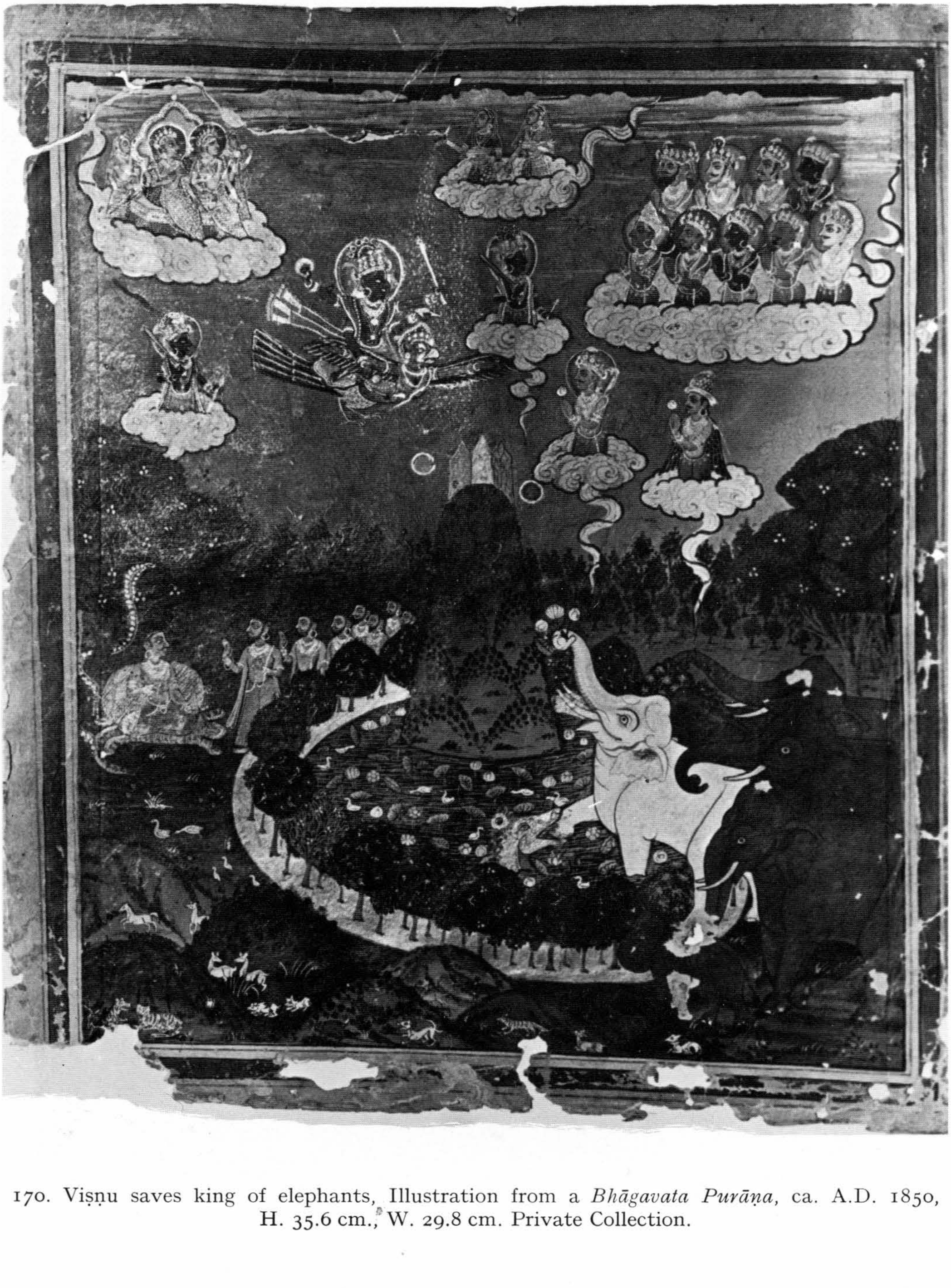
167. Kṛṣṇa aids Sudhanva, Illustration from a *Bhāgavata Purāṇa*, ca. 1800, H. 38.1 cm., W. 55.9 cm. W. G. Archer Collection, London.



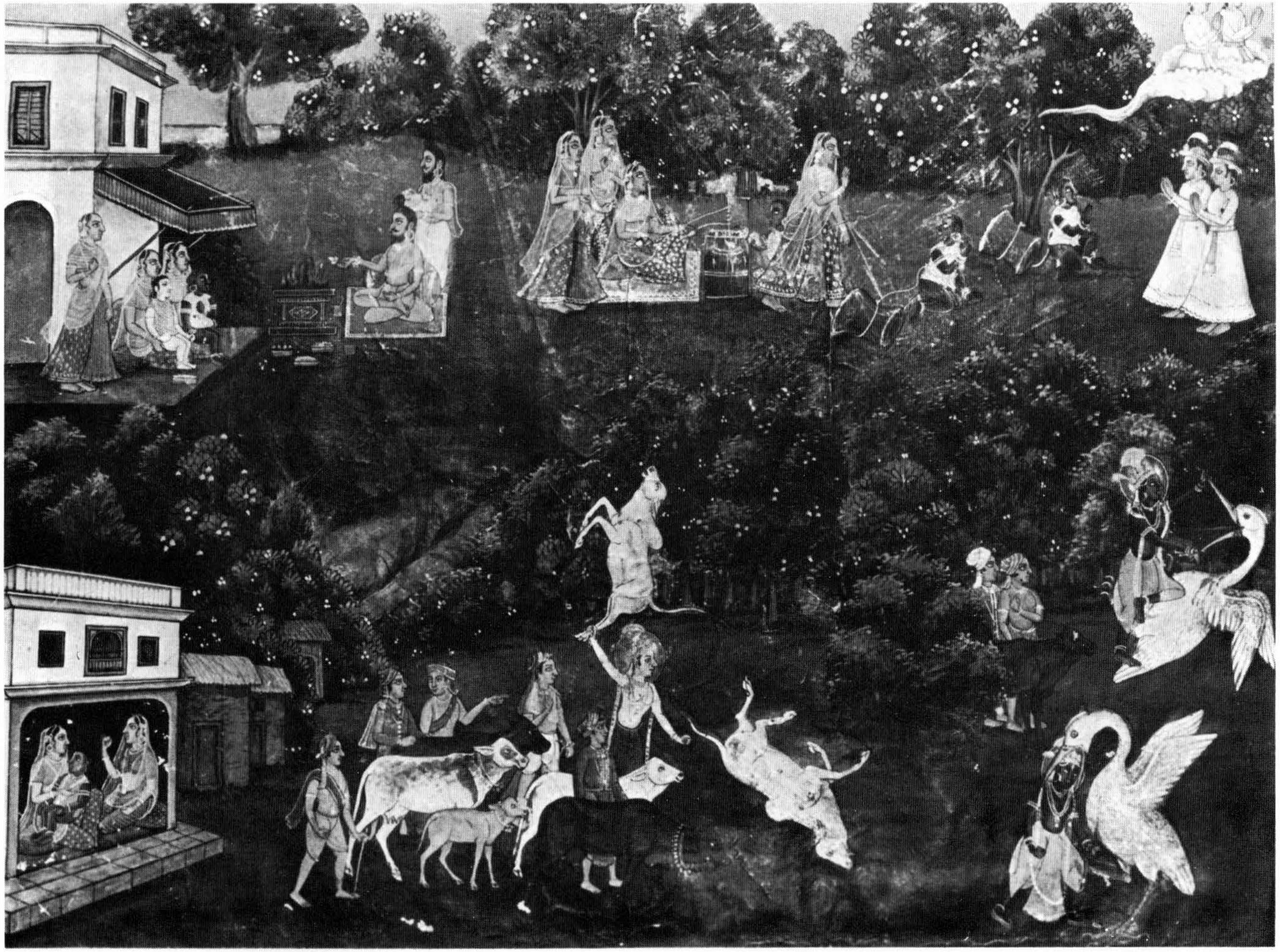
168. Palace of Samvara, from the same set as Fig. 167. Los Angeles County Museum of Art, Gift of Mr. and Mrs. Ed Wiener.



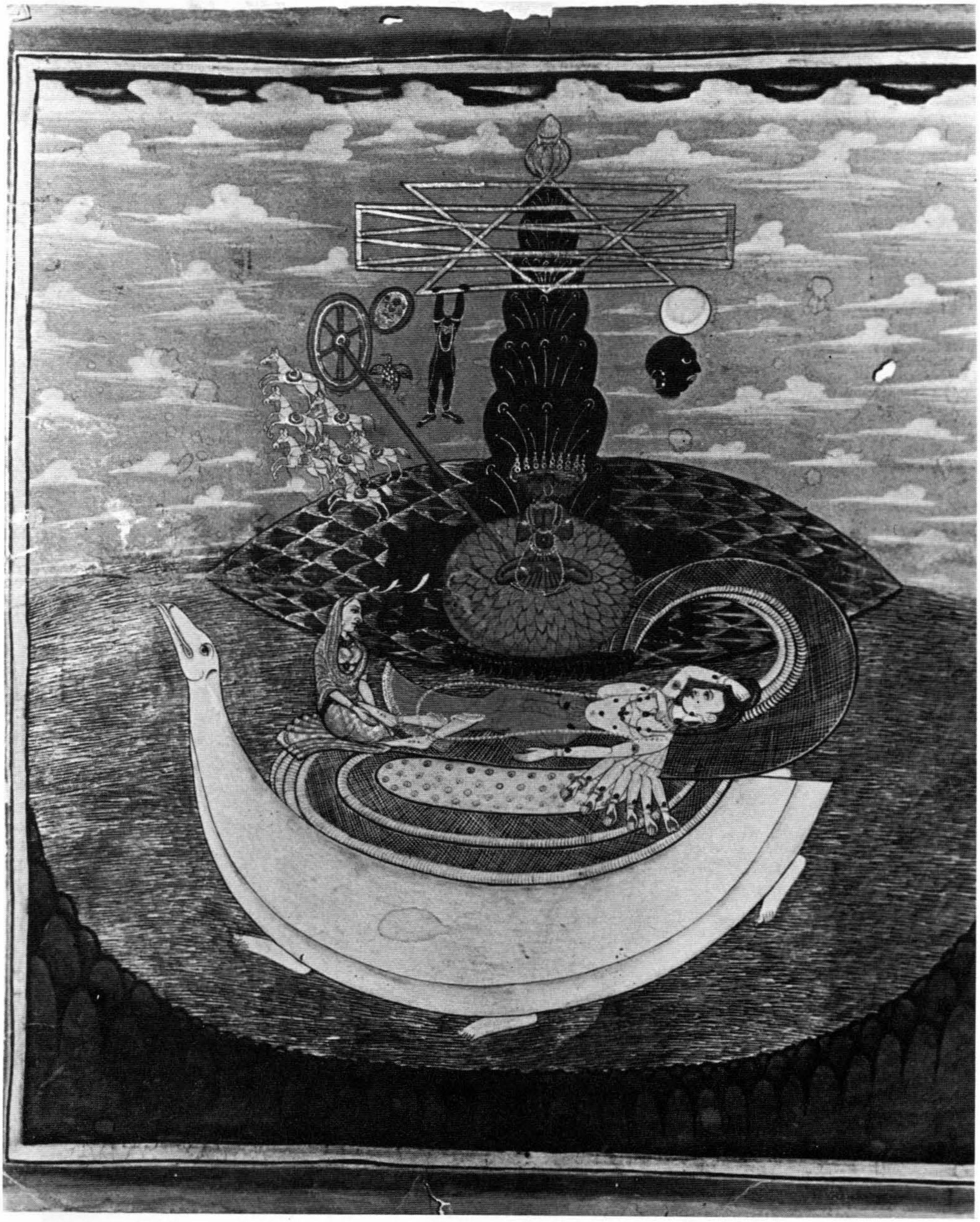
169. Prasena being killed by a lion, from the same set as Figs. 167, 168. Private Collection.



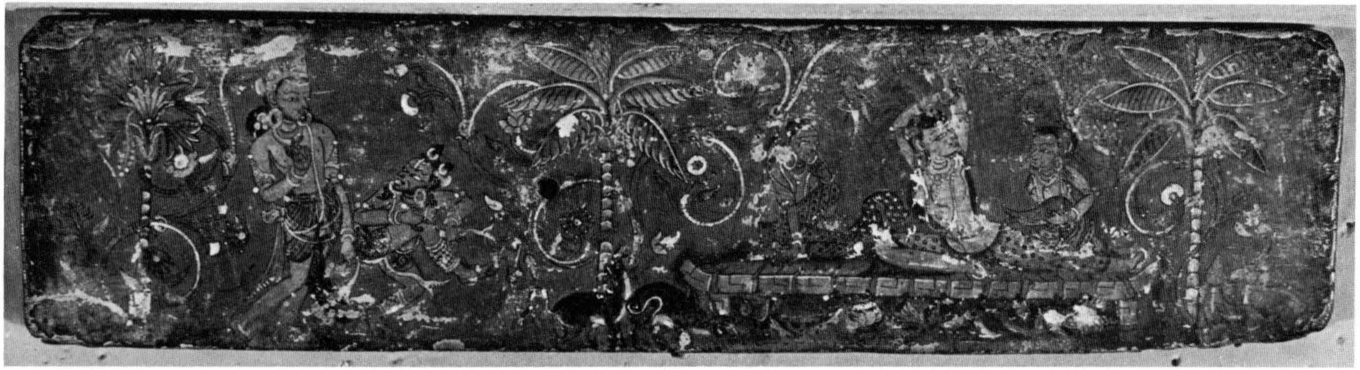
170. Viṣṇu saves king of elephants, Illustration from a *Bhāgavata Purāṇa,* ca. A.D. 1850, H. 35.6 cm., W. 29.8 cm. Private Collection.



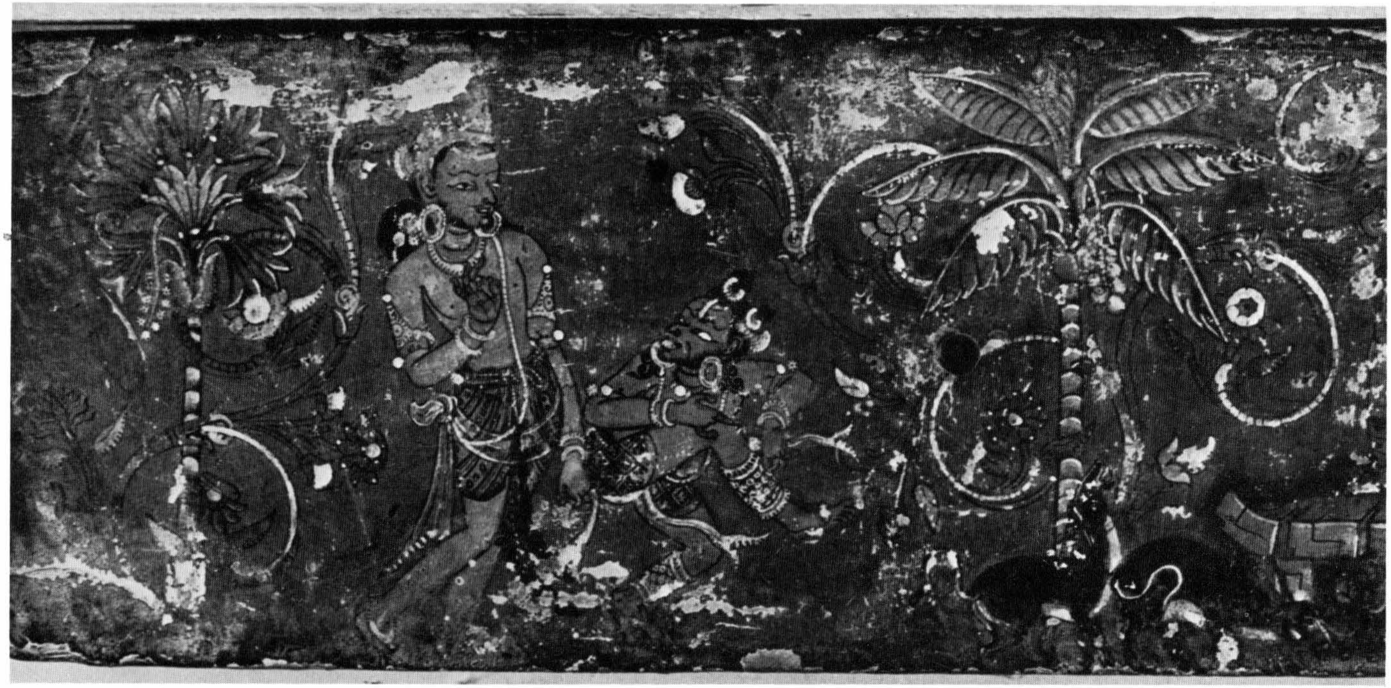
171. Illustration from a *Bhāgavata Purāṇa,* ca. 1875, H. 35.6 cm., W. 45.7 cm. Private Collection.



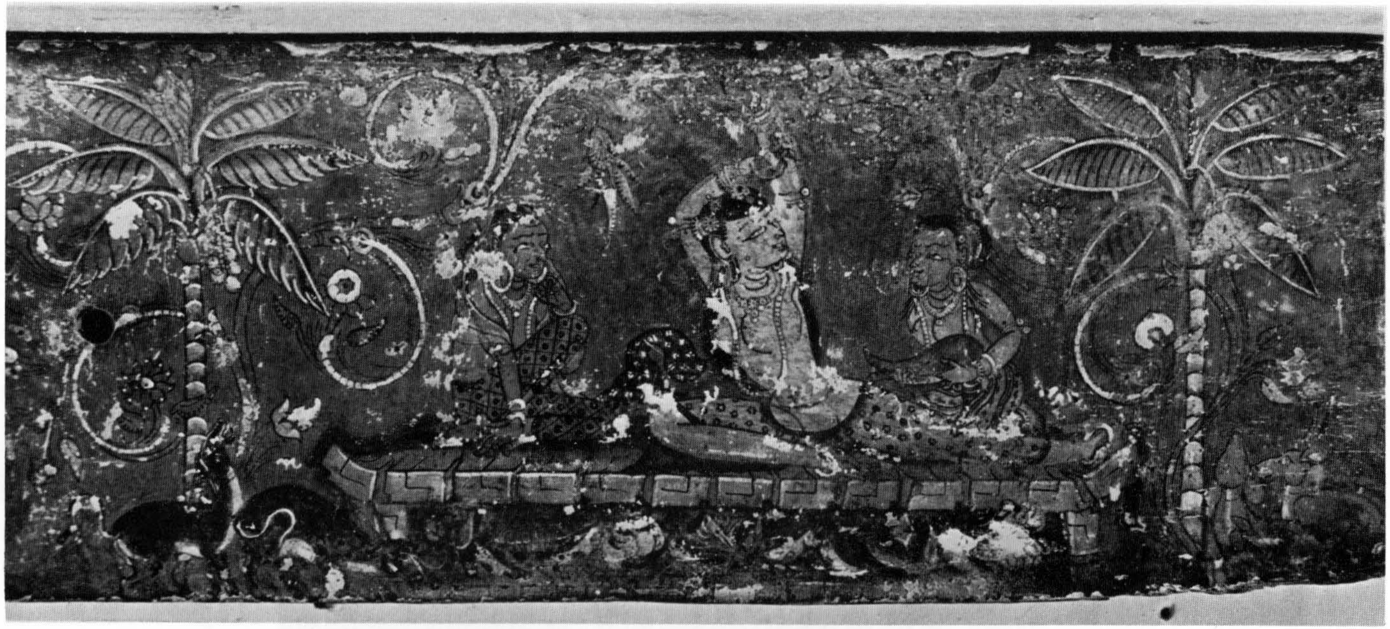
172. Viṣṇu in the cosmic ocean, ca. 1875, H. 36.8 cm., W. 31.1 cm. Private Collection.



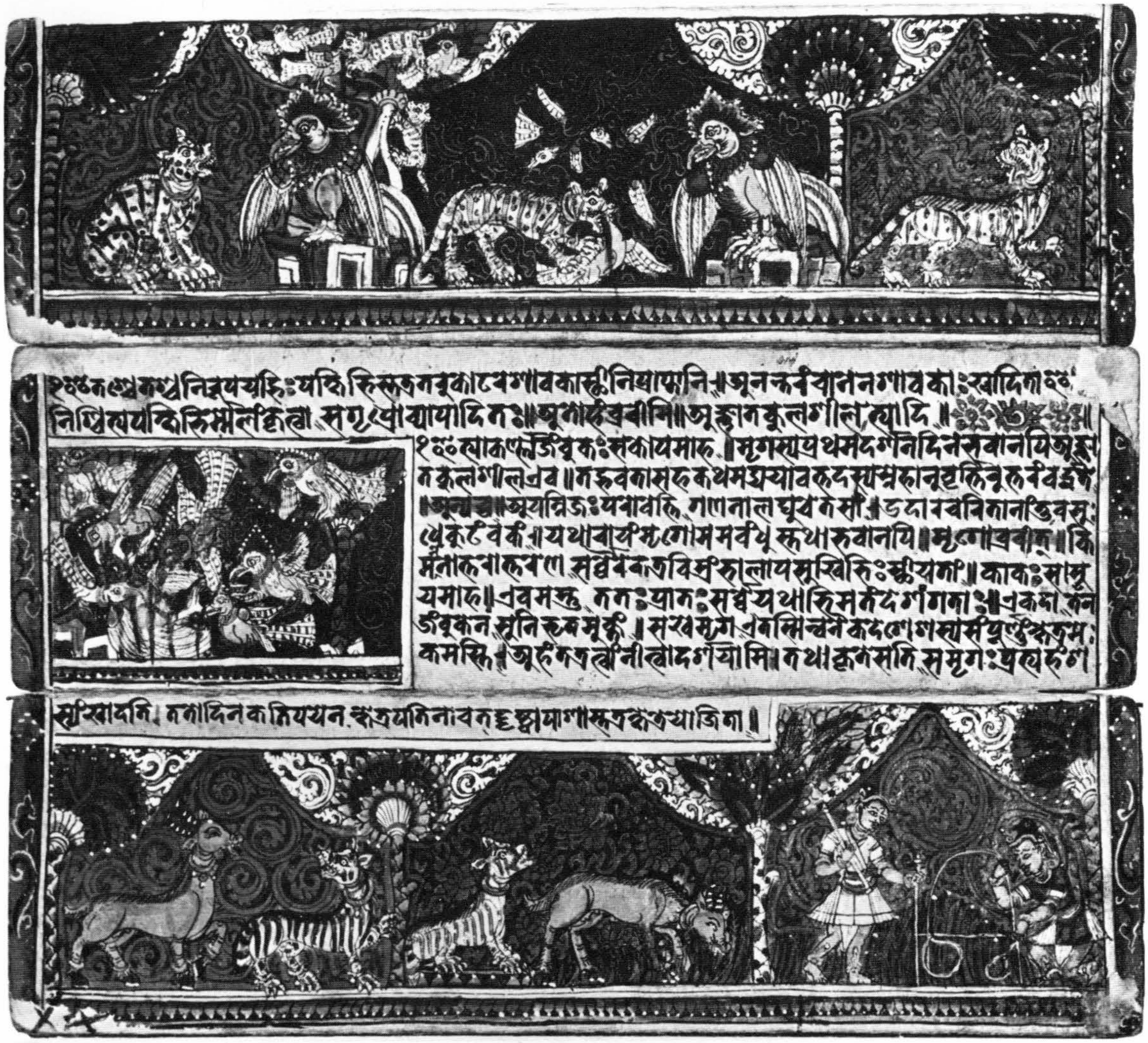
173. Cover depicting scene from a secular story, 13th century, Neotia Collection.



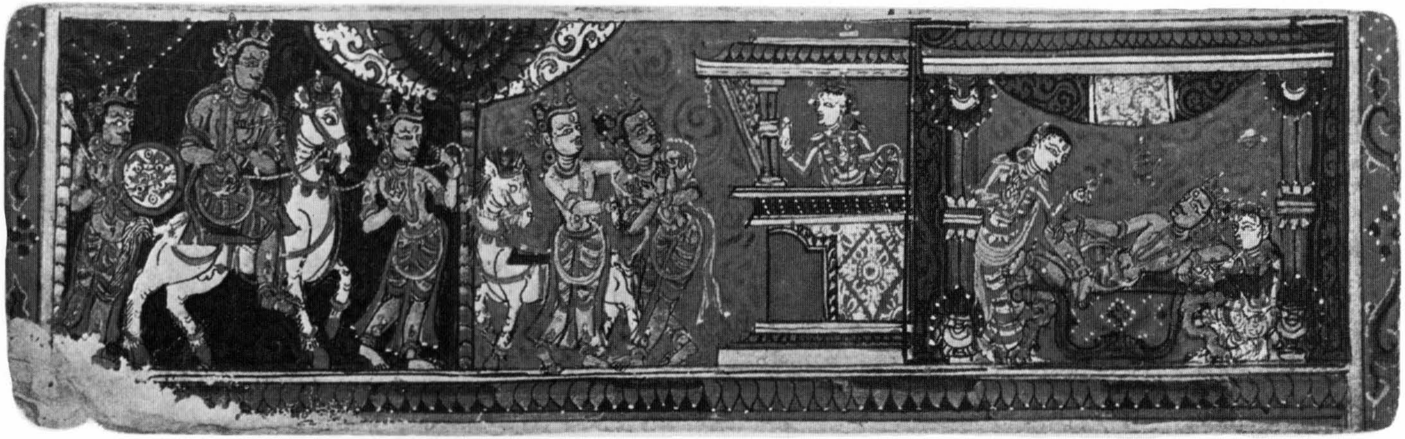
174. Detail of Fig. 173.



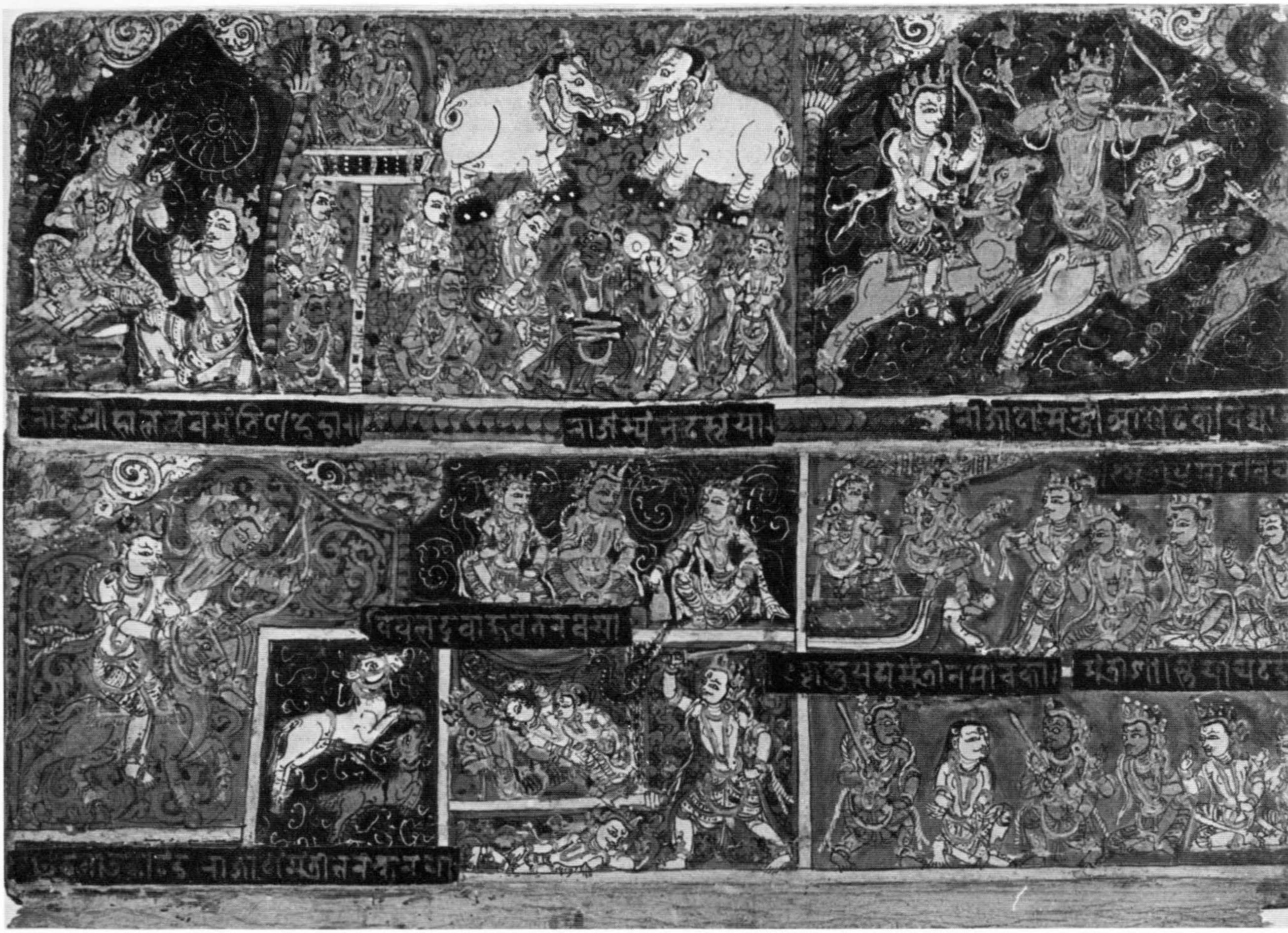
175. Detail of Fig. 173.



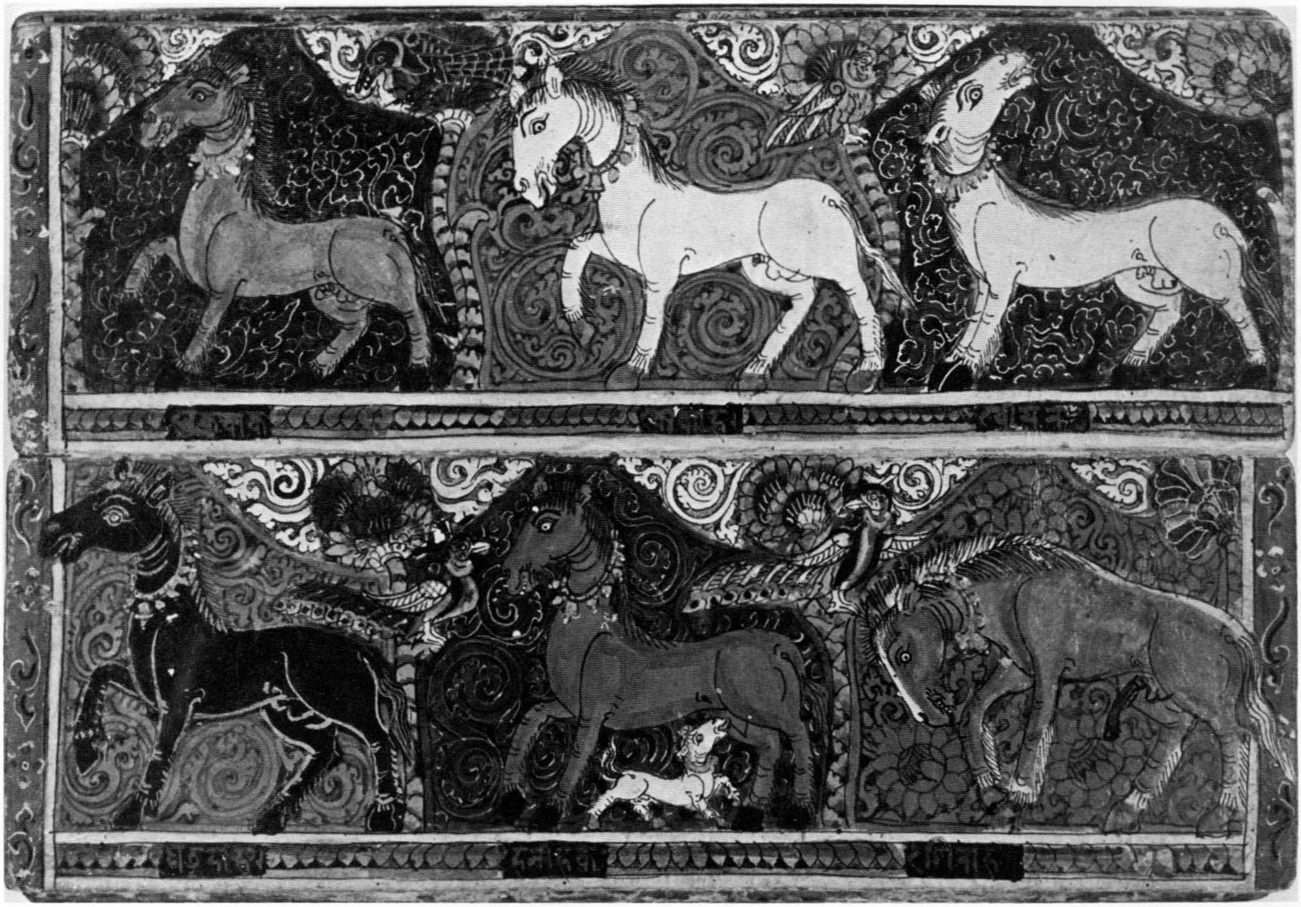
176. Three Pages from a *Hitopadeśa* ms., 1594, each page, H. 6.7 cm., W. 22.2 dm. The National Library, Kathmandu.



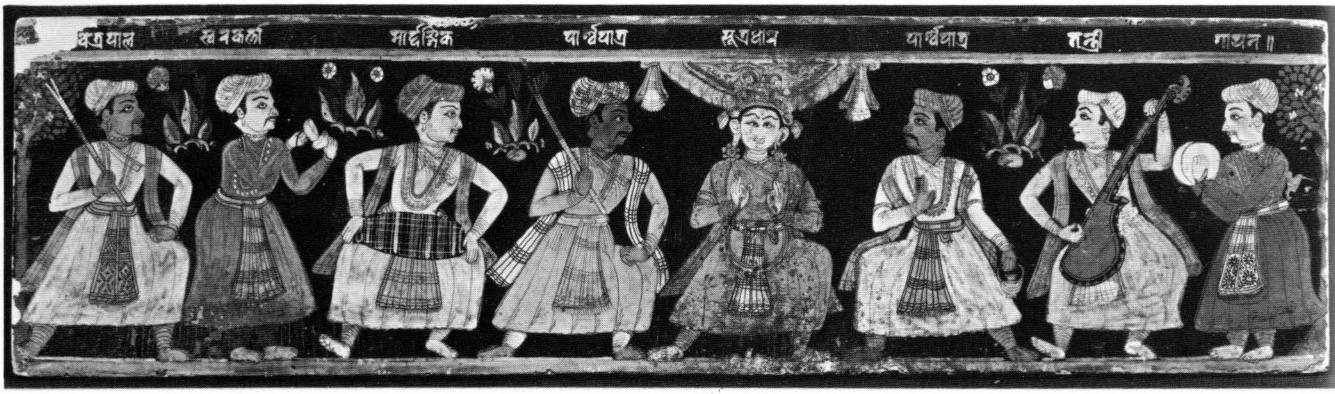
177. Illustration from a *Pañcatantra* ms., ca. 1600, J. P. Goenka Collection, Calcutta.



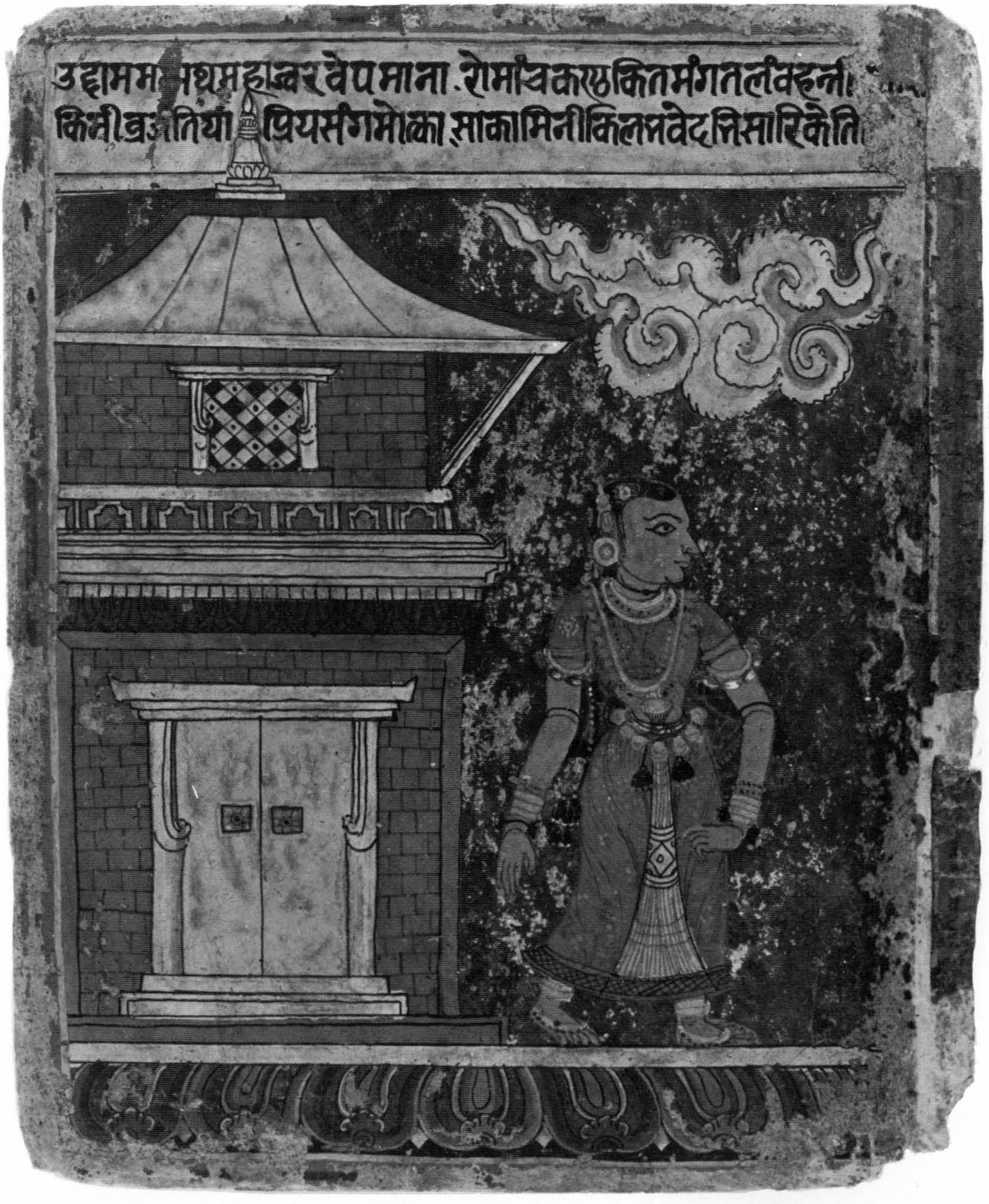
178. Scenes of Hunting with King Hāla, from a Kalāpustaka, ca. 1600. University Library, Cambridge.



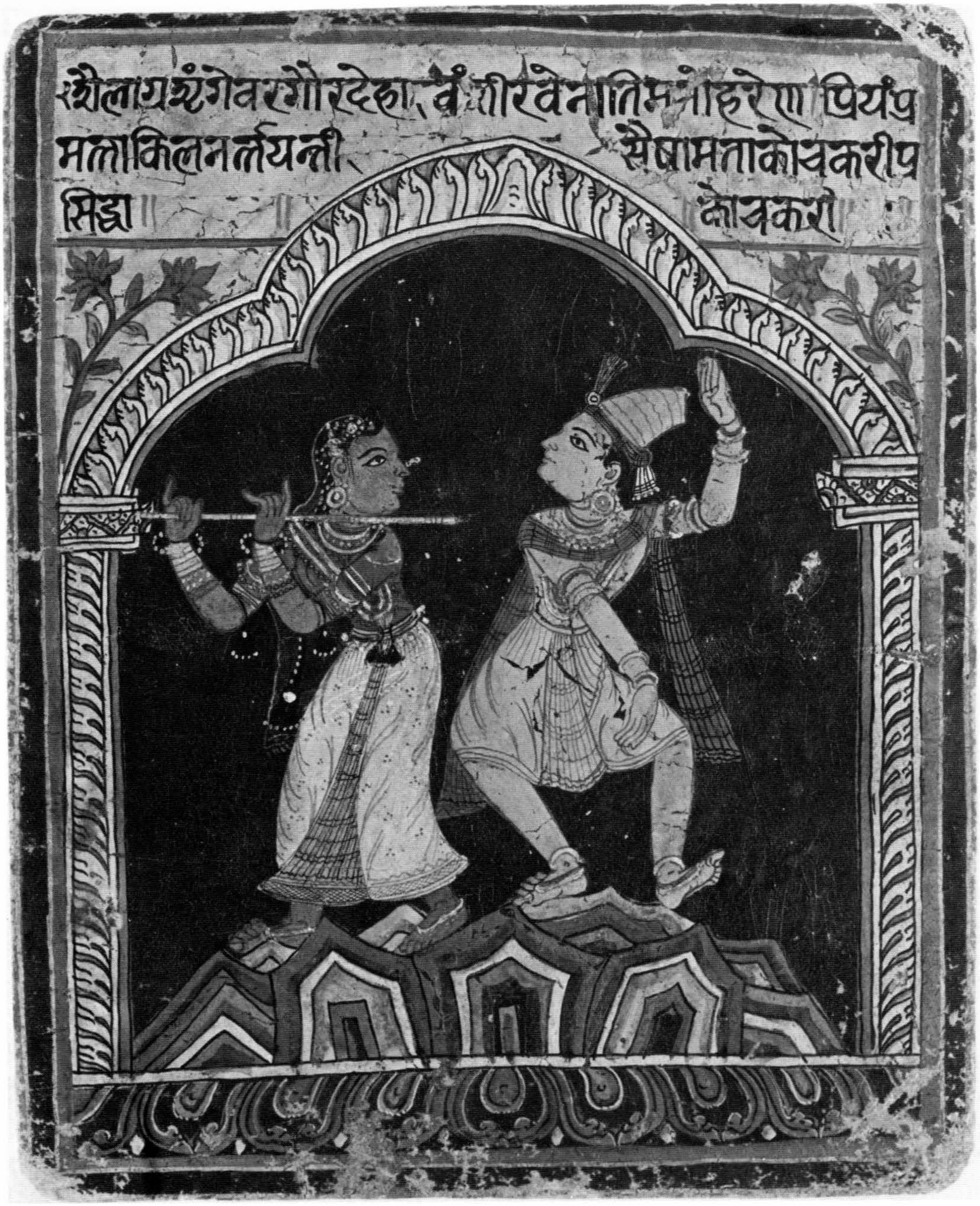
179. Horses, from the same Kalāpustaka as Fig. 178.


छत्रपाल
स्वनकली
मार्दङ्गिक
पार्श्वपात्र
सूत्रधार
पार्श्वपात्र
नन्दी
गायन ॥

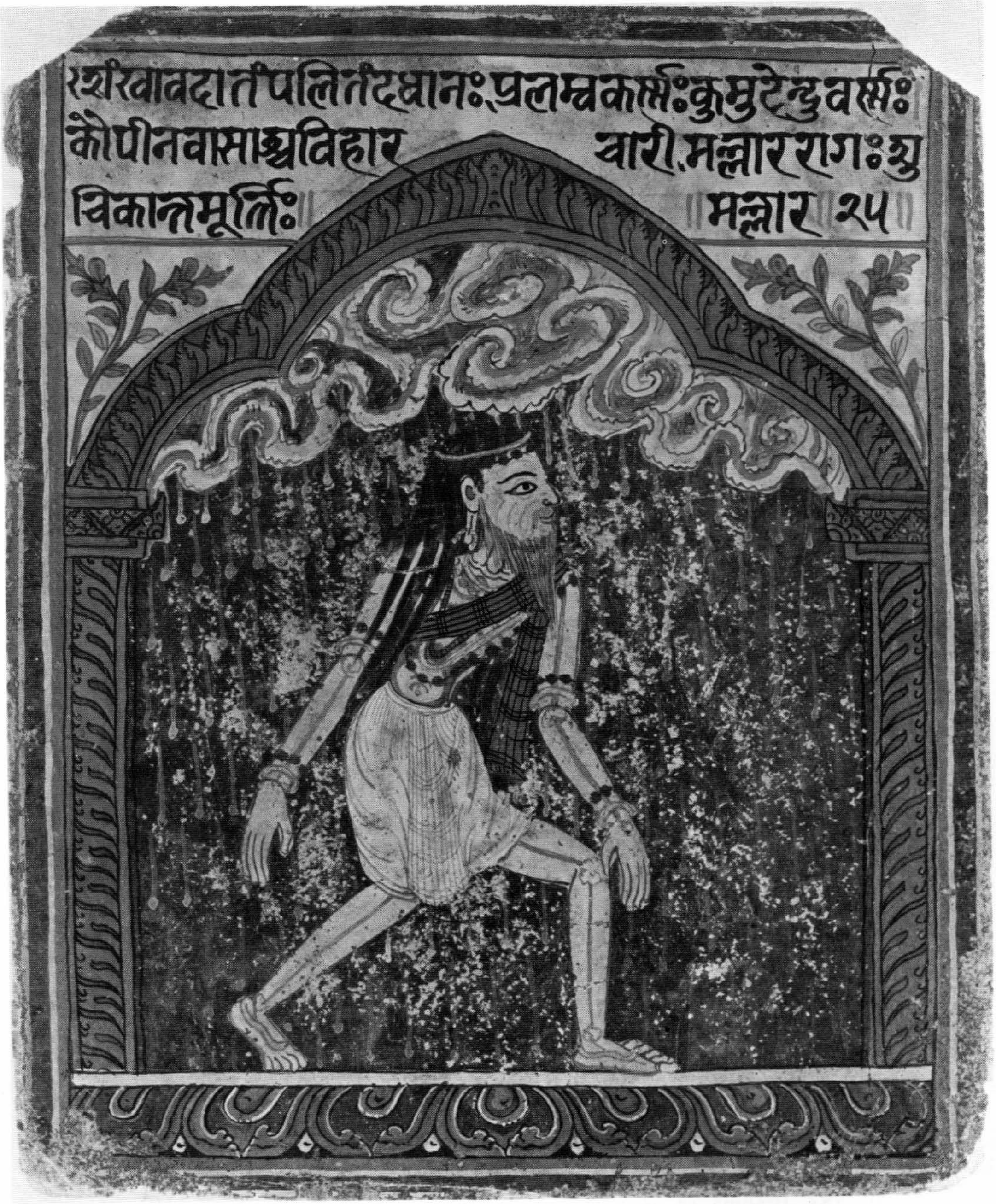
180. Cover of a Drama ms., ca. 1650, H. 10.4 cm., W. 38.4 cm. Edwin Binney 3rd Collection.


उद्दामम थमहाज्वरवेपमाना .रोमांचकण्ठकितमंगतलंवहन्ती
किंनीव्रजतियां प्रियसंगमोत्का साकामिनीकिलप्रवेदत्तिसारिकेति

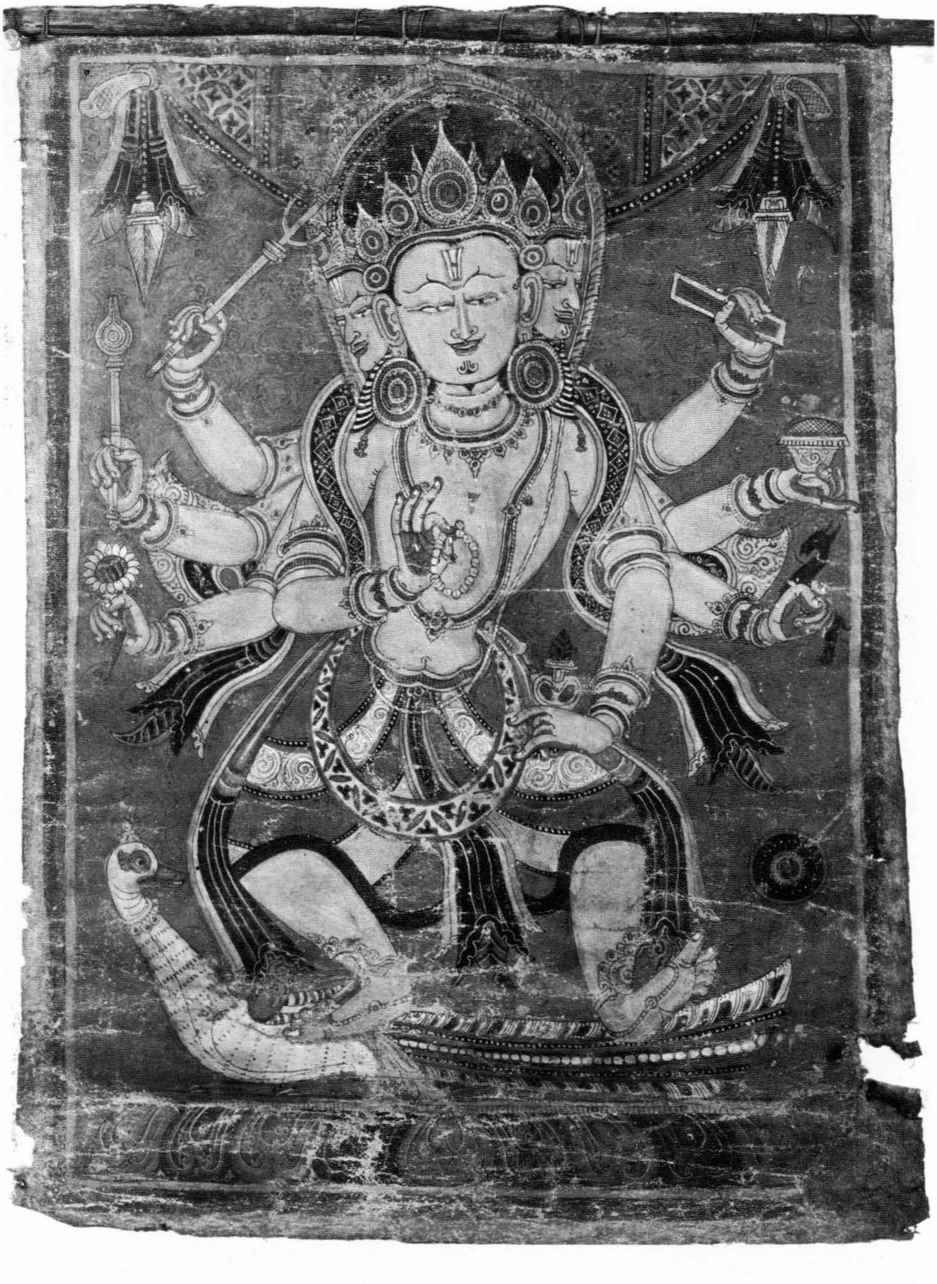
181. Abhisārikā Nāyikā, from a *Rāgamālā* set, ca. 1650, H. 17.9 cm., W. 14.3 cm. Los Angeles County Museum of Art.


रशैलाग्रश्टंगेवरगौरदेहा, वंशीरवेनातिमनोहरेण॥ प्रियंप्र
मत्ताकिलनर्तयन्ती
सैषामताकोचकरीप्र
सिद्धा॥
कोचकरी॥

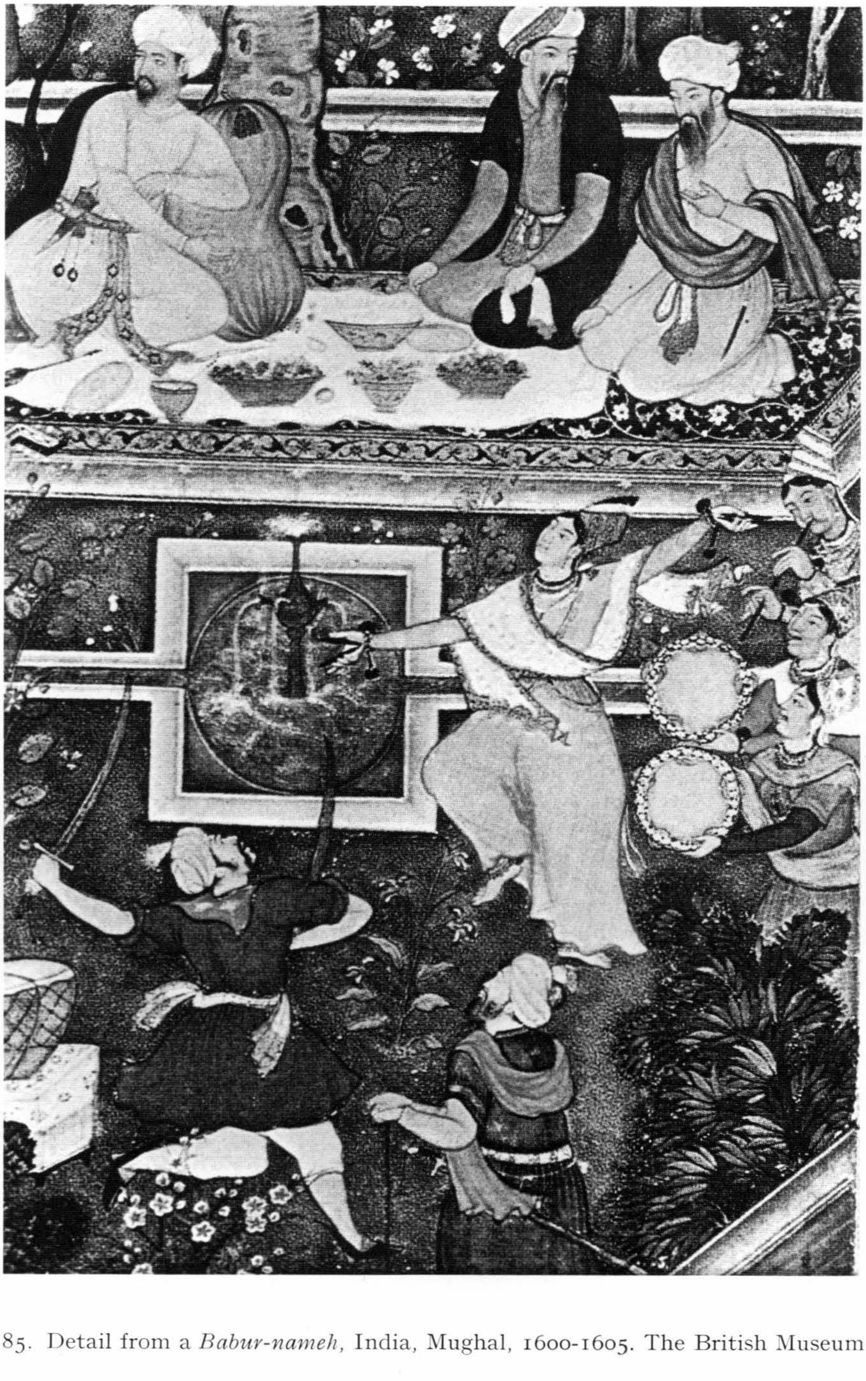
182. Kocakarī rāgiṇī, from the same set as Fig. 181. Norton Simon Collection.


रशीखावदातं पलितंदधानः प्रलम्बकर्णःकुमुदेन्दुवर्णः
कौपीनवासाश्चविहार चारी.मल्लाररागःशु
चिकान्तमूर्त्तिः ॥ ॥ मल्लार २५ ॥

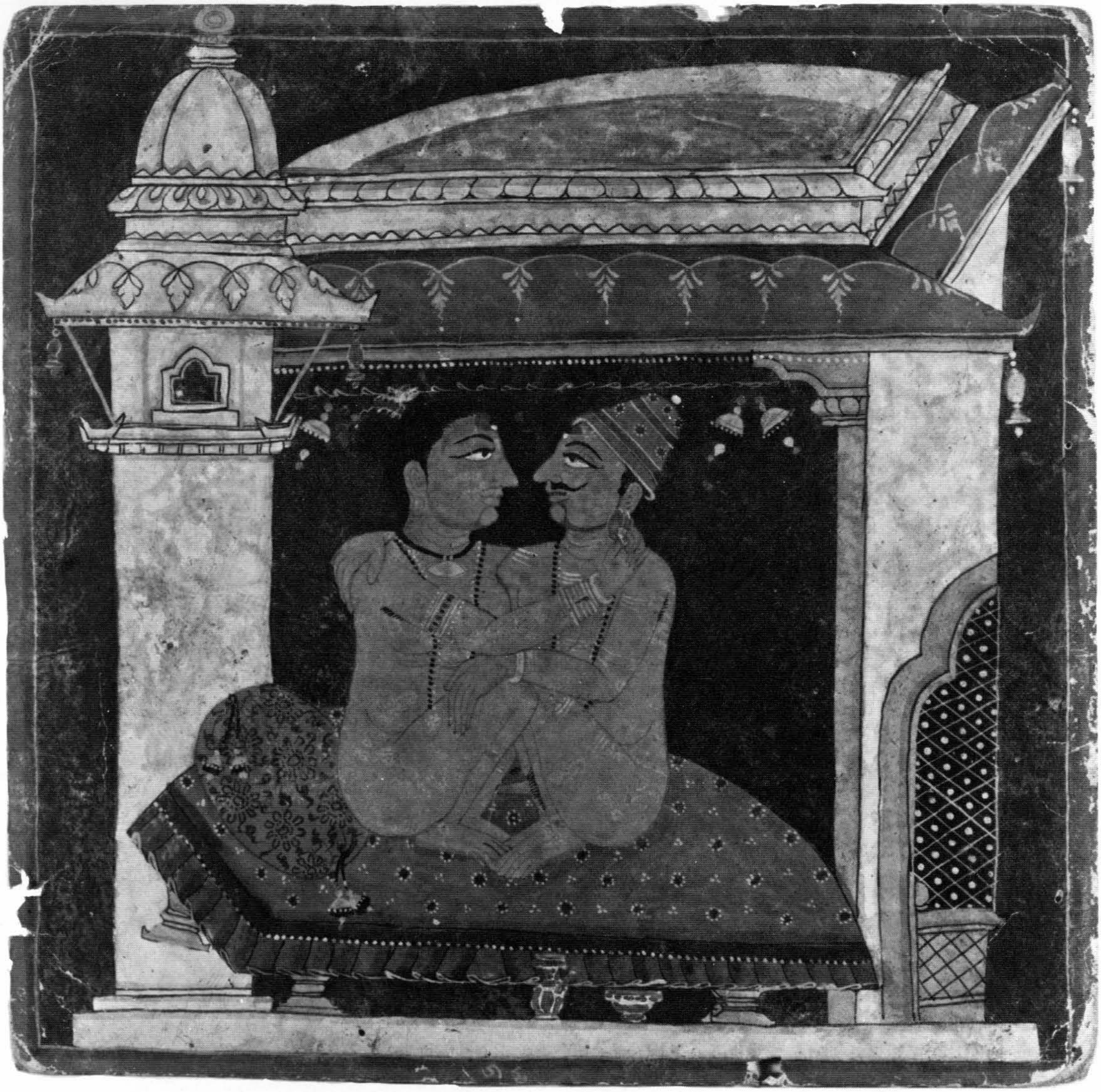
183. Mallāra rāga, from the same set as Fig. 181, Norton Simon Collection.



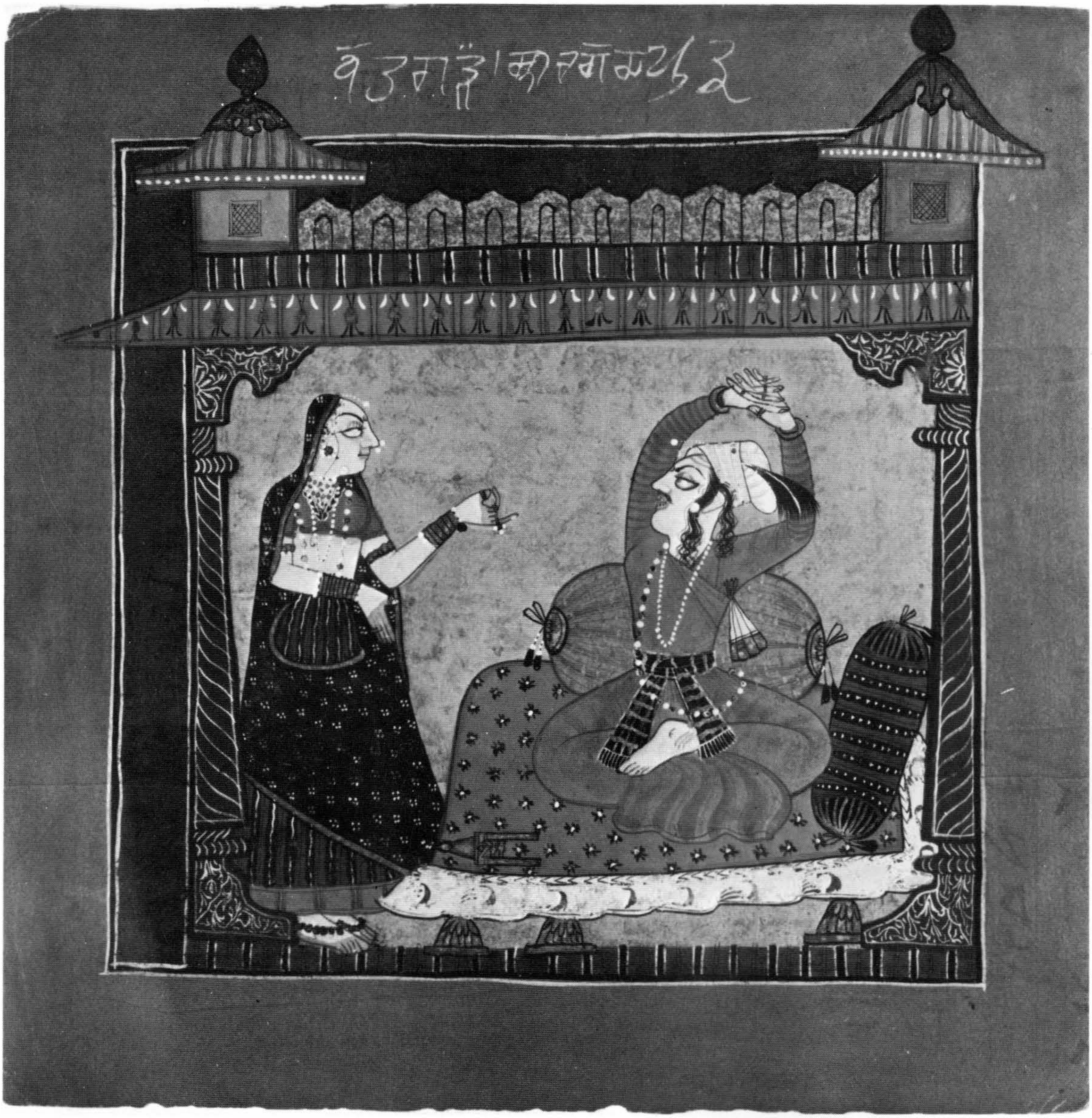
184. Brahmā, ca. 1600, H. 63.5 cm. Museum of Fine Arts, Boston.



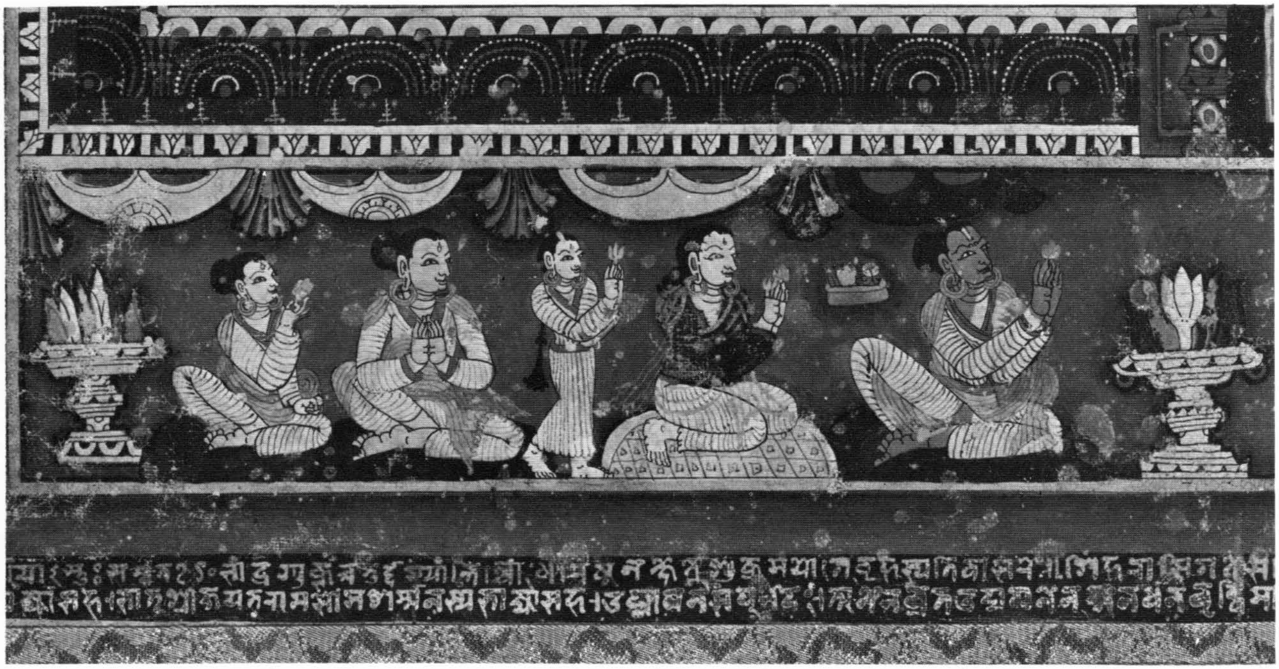
185. Detail from a *Babur-nameh,* India, Mughal, 1600-1605. The British Museum.



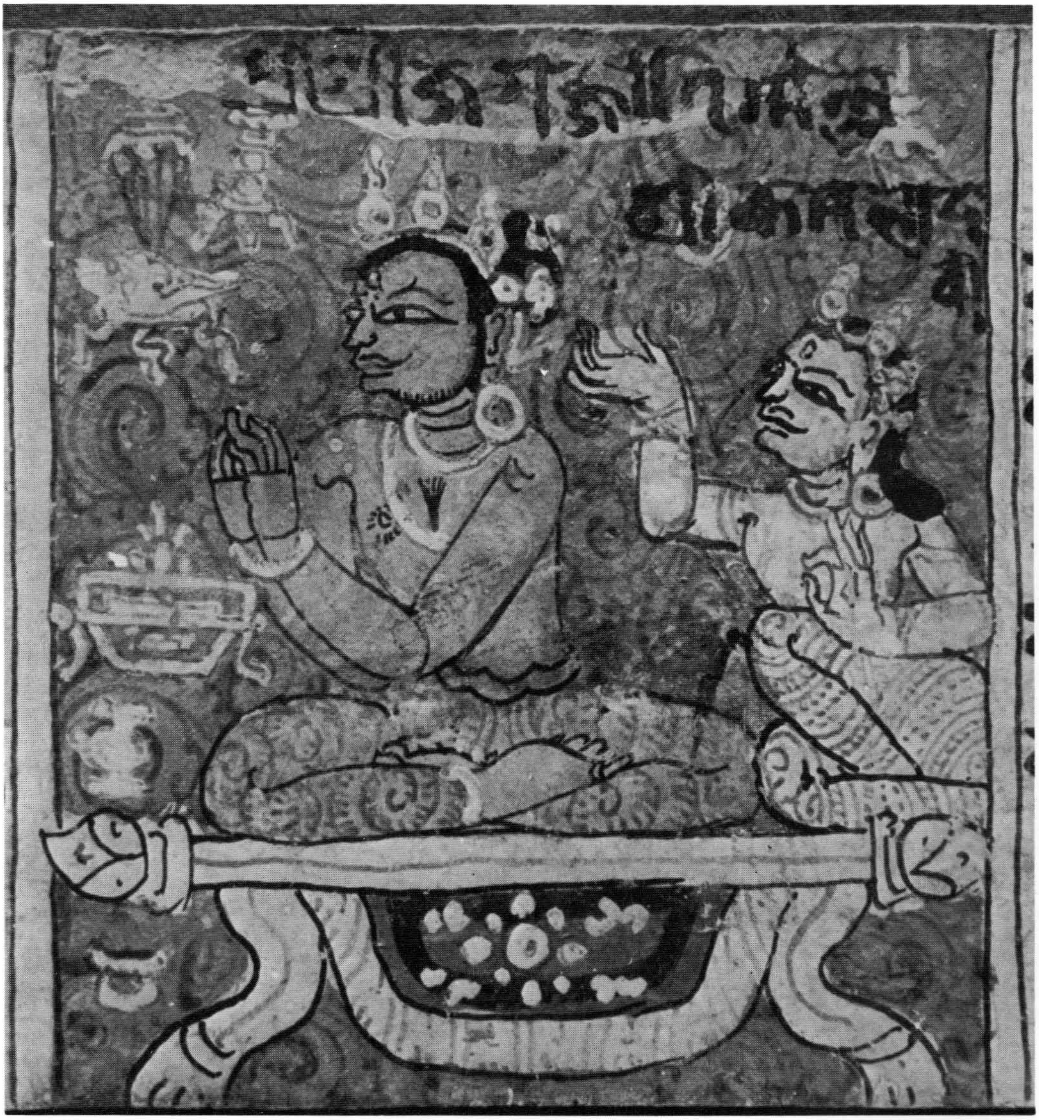
186. Folio from an Erotic album, ca. 1700, H. 18 cm., W. 18 cm. Victoria and Albert Museum.



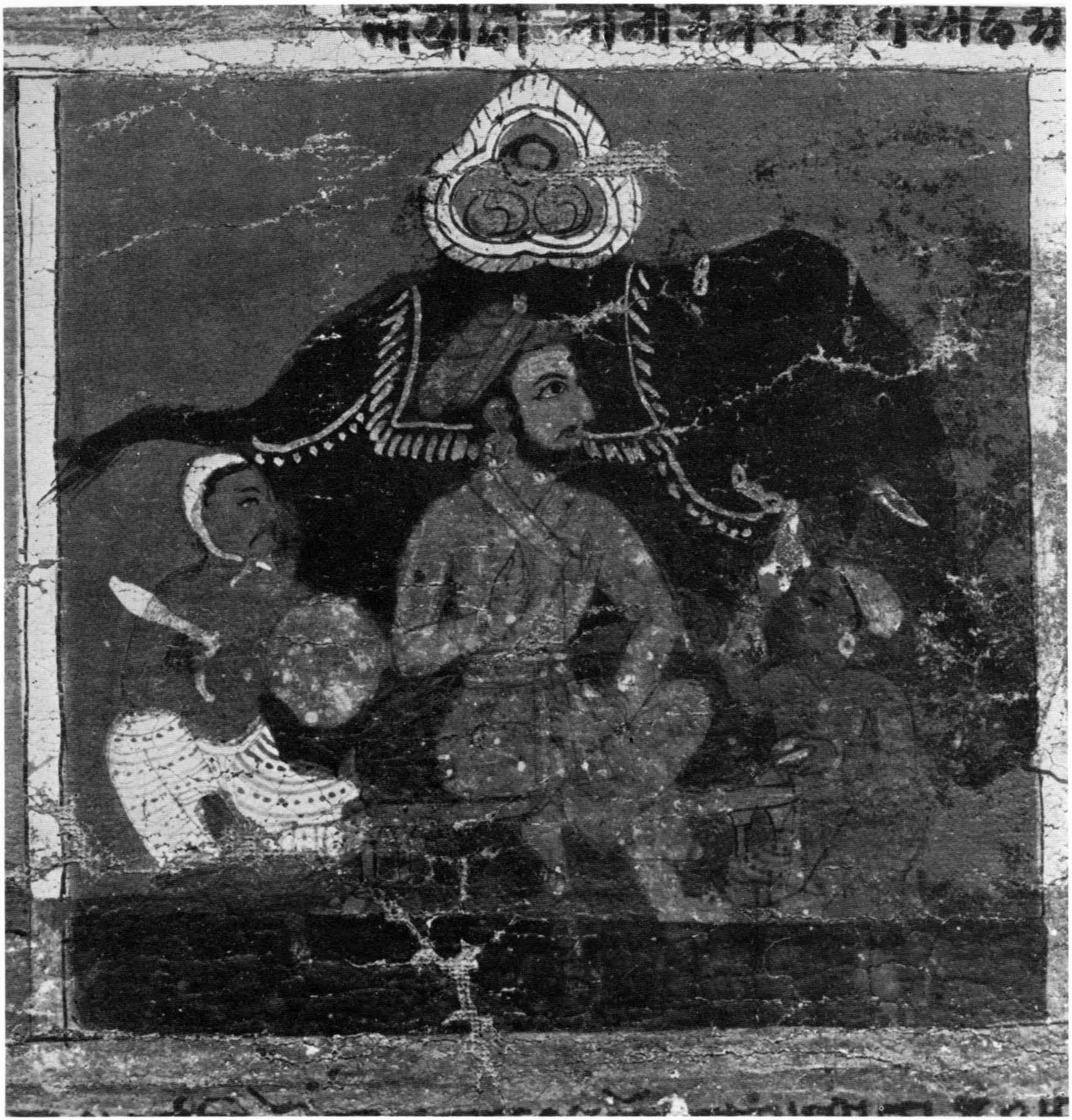
187. Vihagada rāga, India, Kulu, 1700-1710, H. 15.8 cm., W. 15.7 cm. Victoria and Albert Museum.



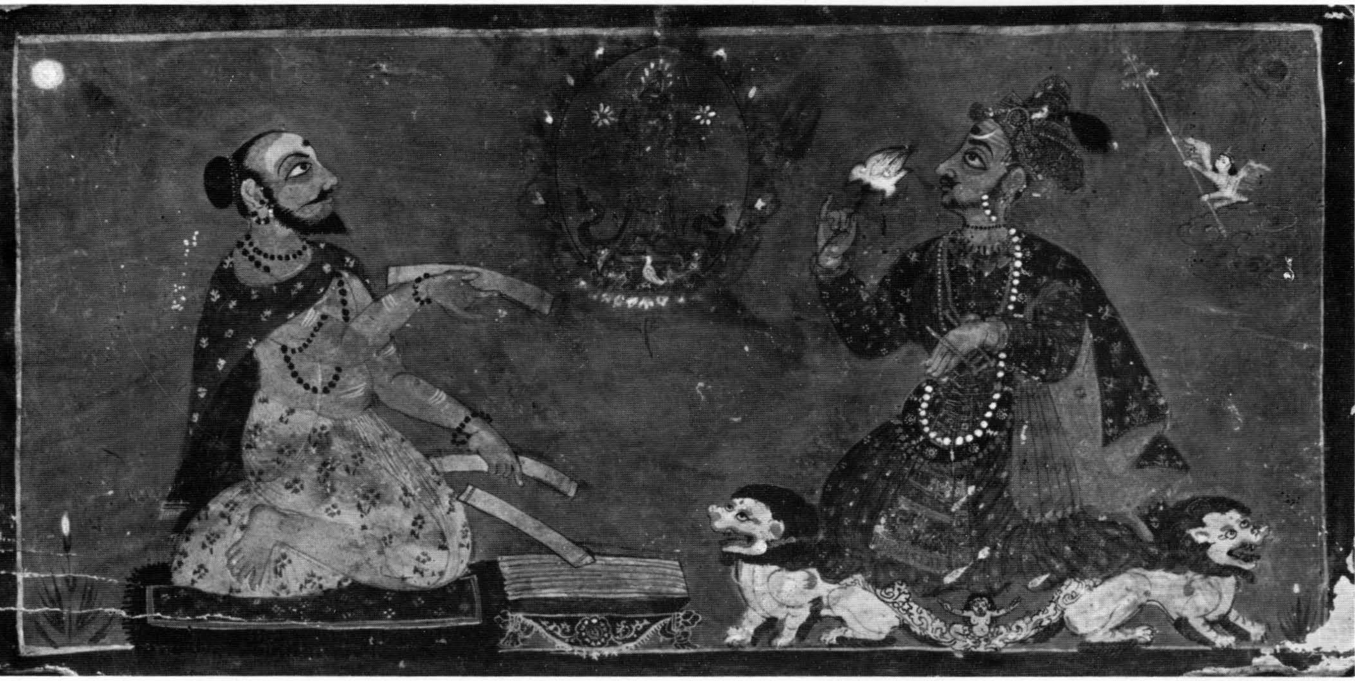
188. Self-portrait of Tejarāma, detail from Fig. 1.



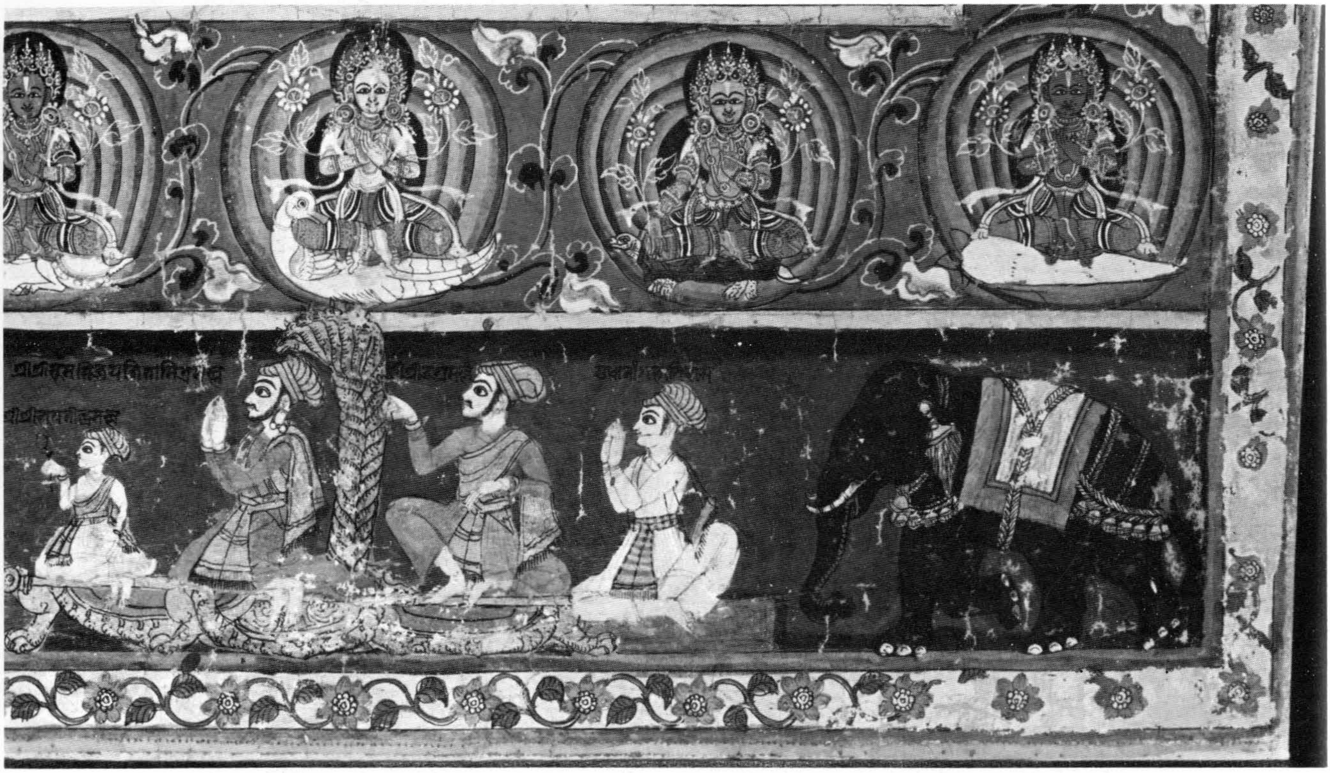
189. King Jagajjyotirmalla and Queen Kamalādevī, From a *Devīmāhātmya* ms. 1610, H. 5.7 cm. Prince of Wales Museum, Bombay.



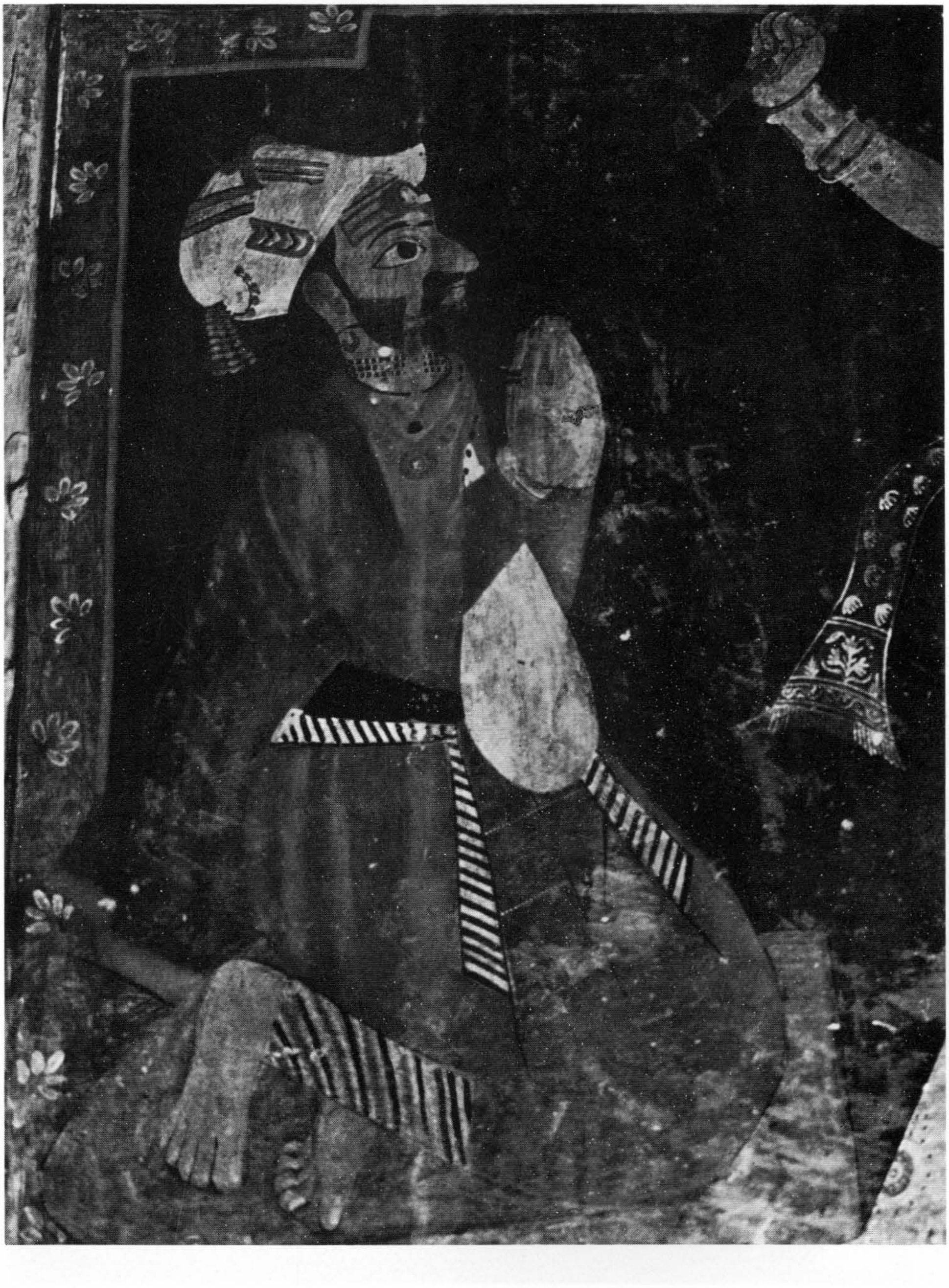
190. King Pratāpamalla, detail from Fig. 113.



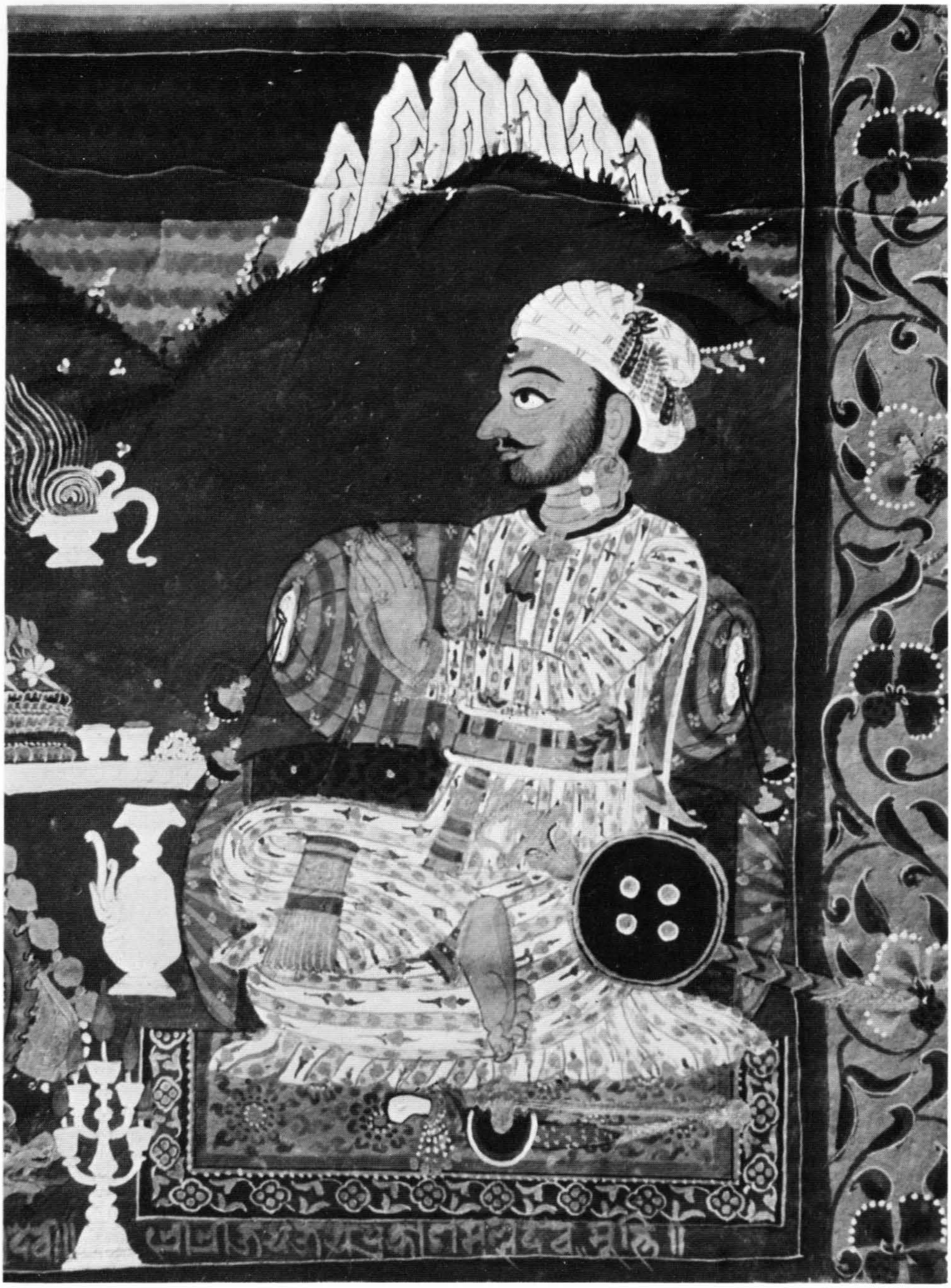
191. King Śrīnivāsamalla and Viśvanātha Upādhyāya, 1681-84, from the same cover as Fig. 63.



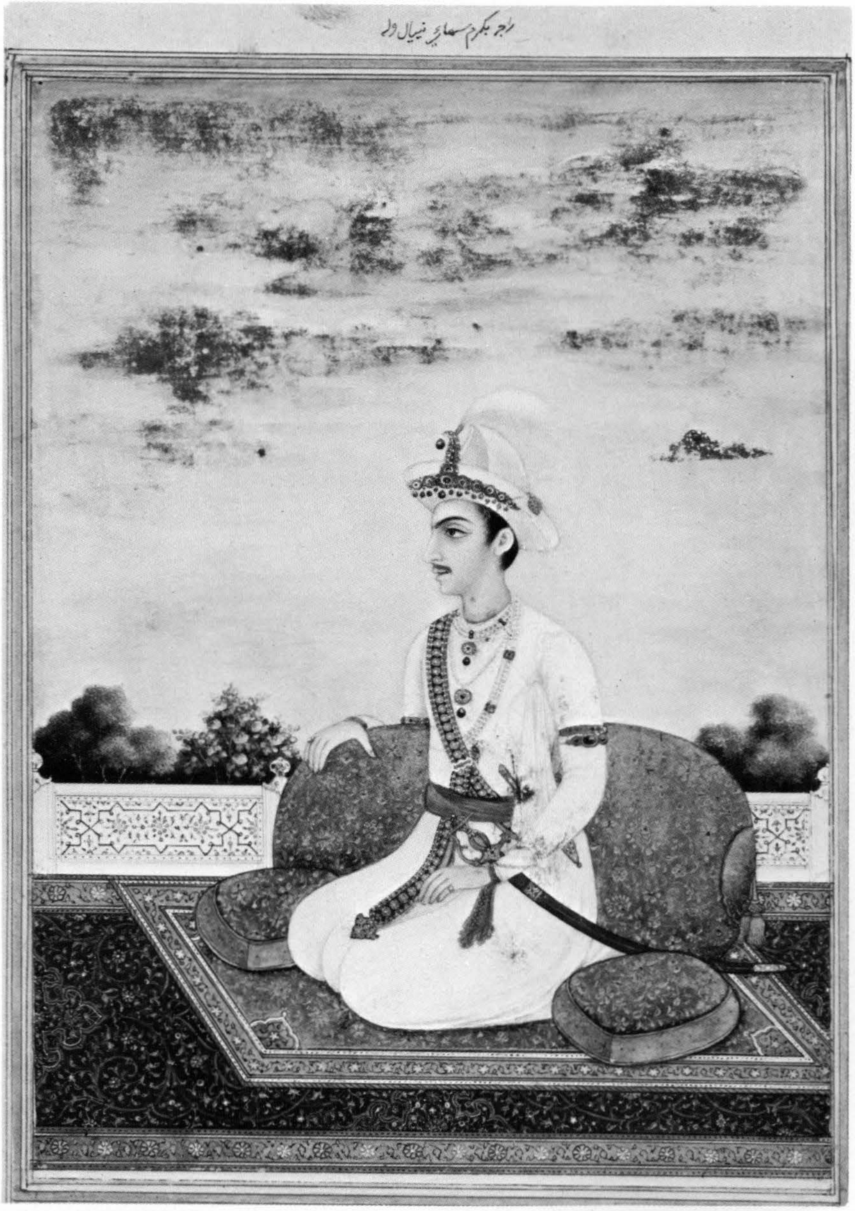
192. King Jitāmitramalla and others, 1681, detail from Fig. 115. Los Angeles County Museum of Art.



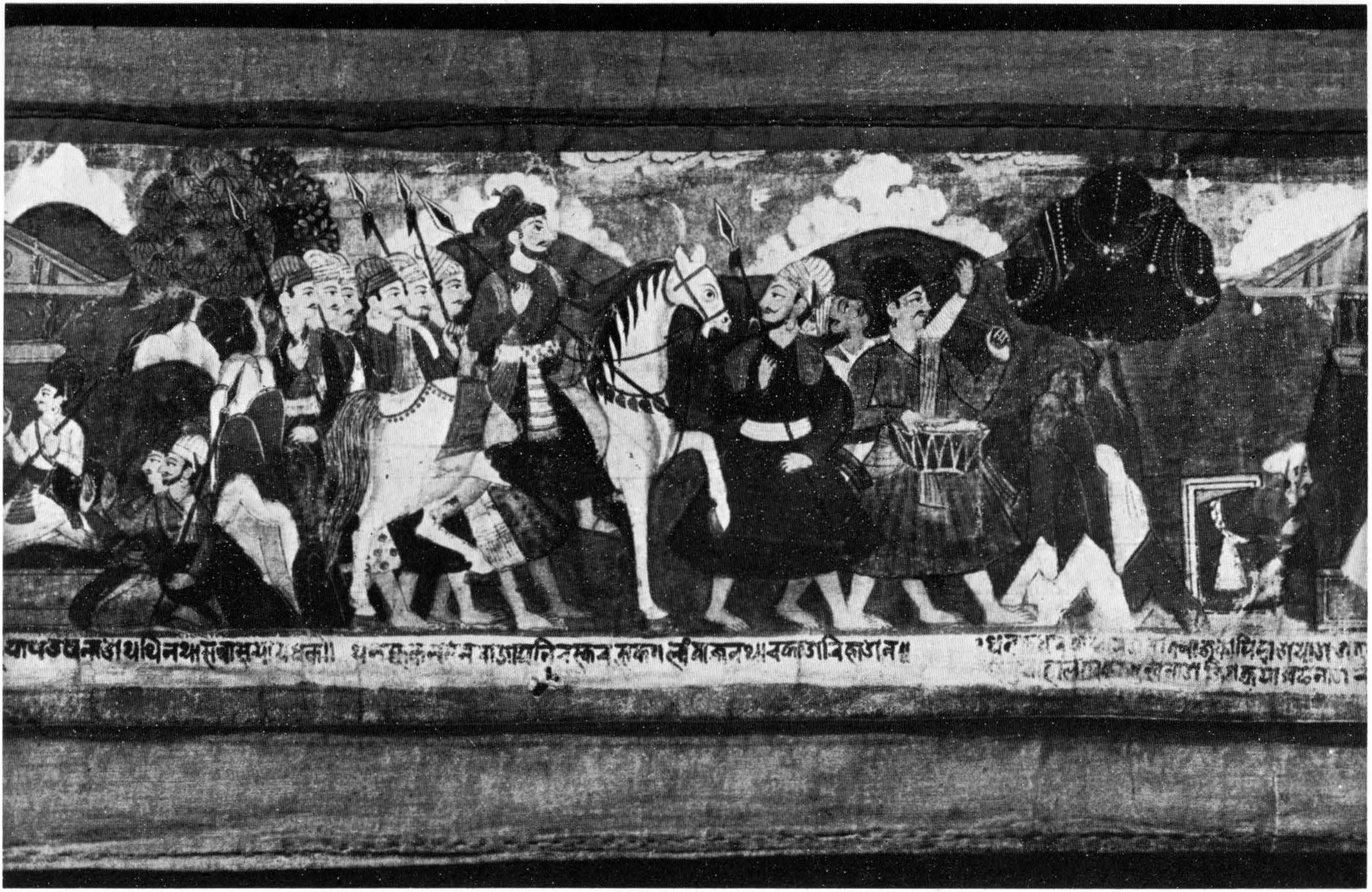
193. King Bhupatīndramalla, 1696-1721, Mural in Bhadgaon Palace.



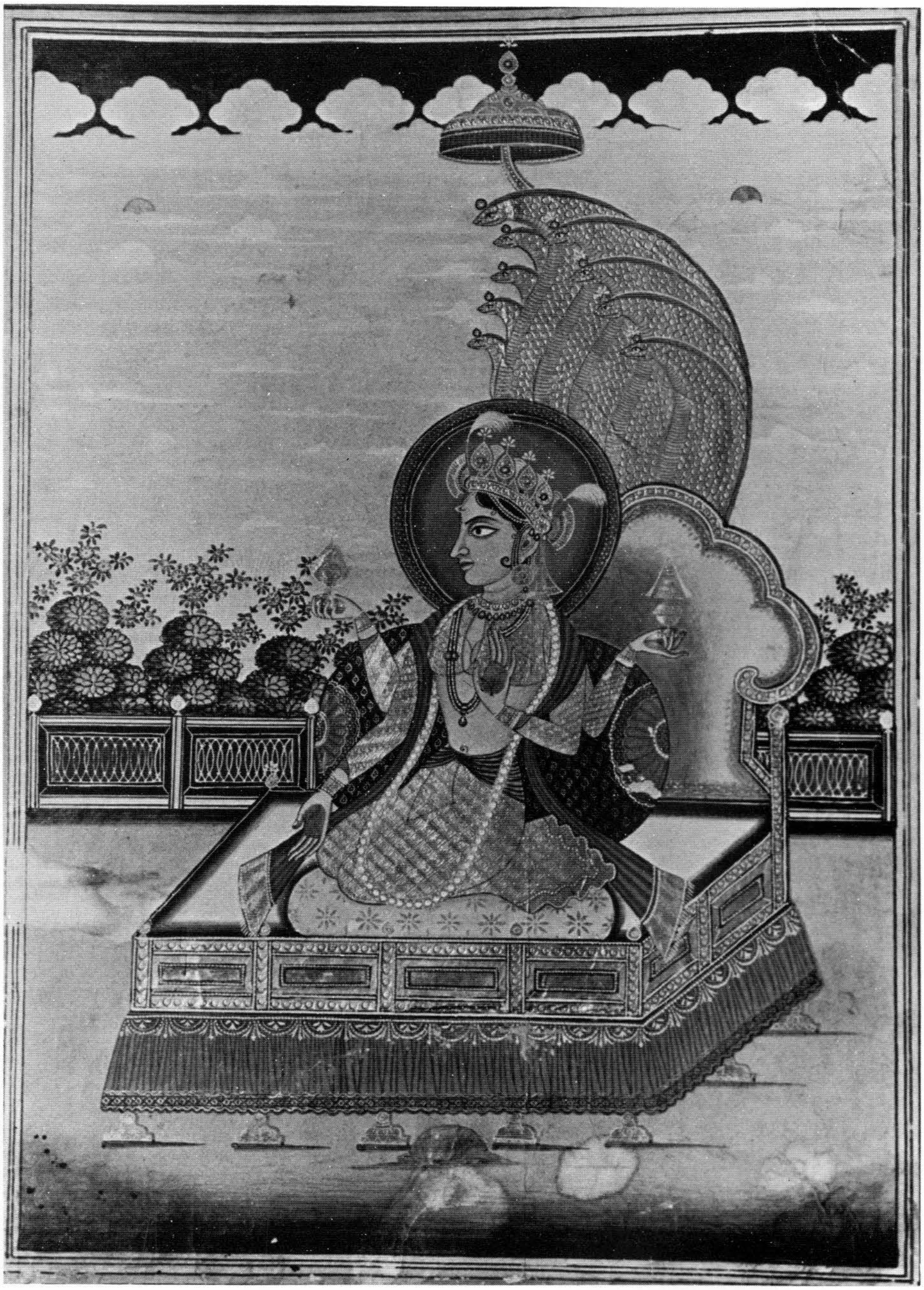
194. King Prakāśamalla, from a Kalāpustaka, ca. 1765, Bharat Kala Bhavan, Banaras.


راجه بکرم سمای نیپال والے

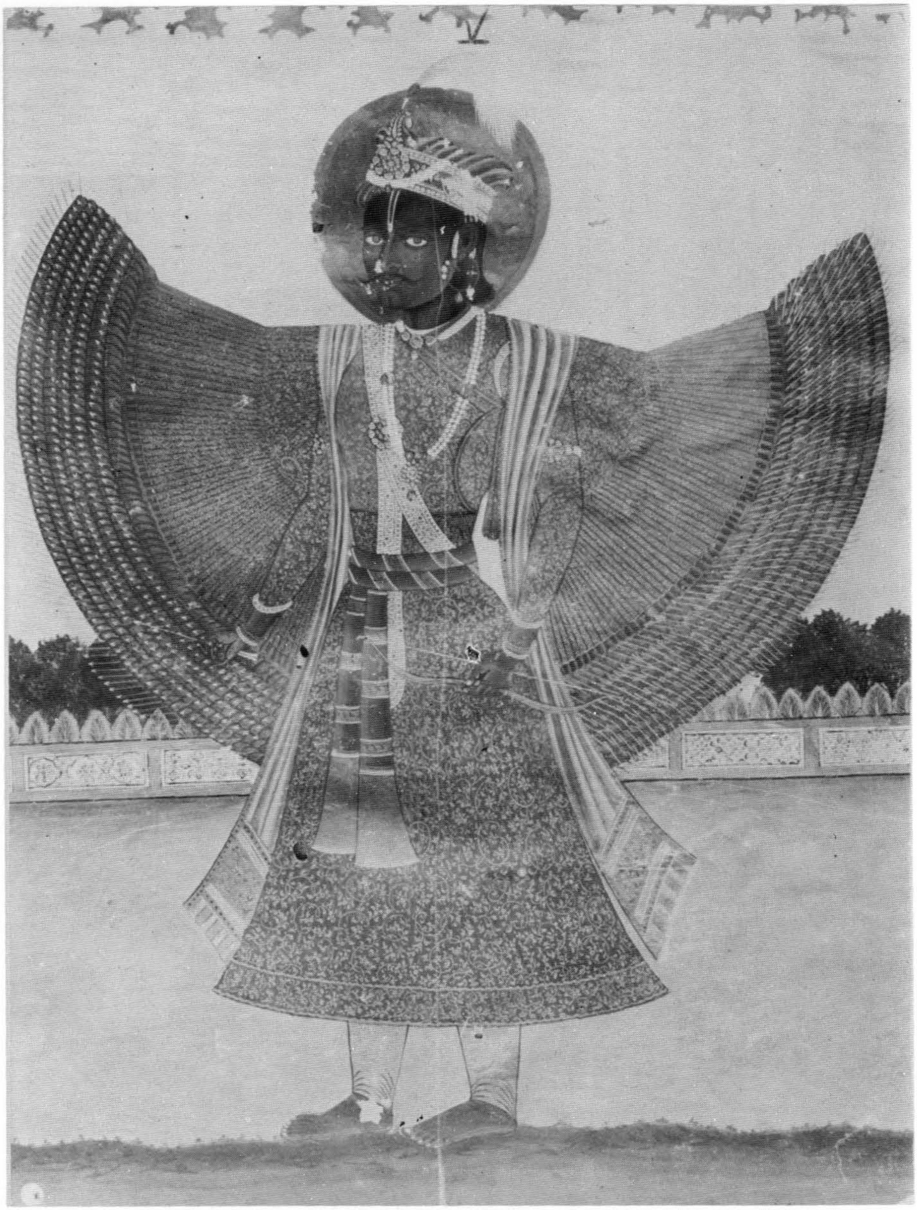
195. King Gīrvāṇa Yuddhavikrama Shāh, ca. 1800, H. 17.4 cm., W. 12.5 cm. Freer Gallery of Art, Washington, D.C.



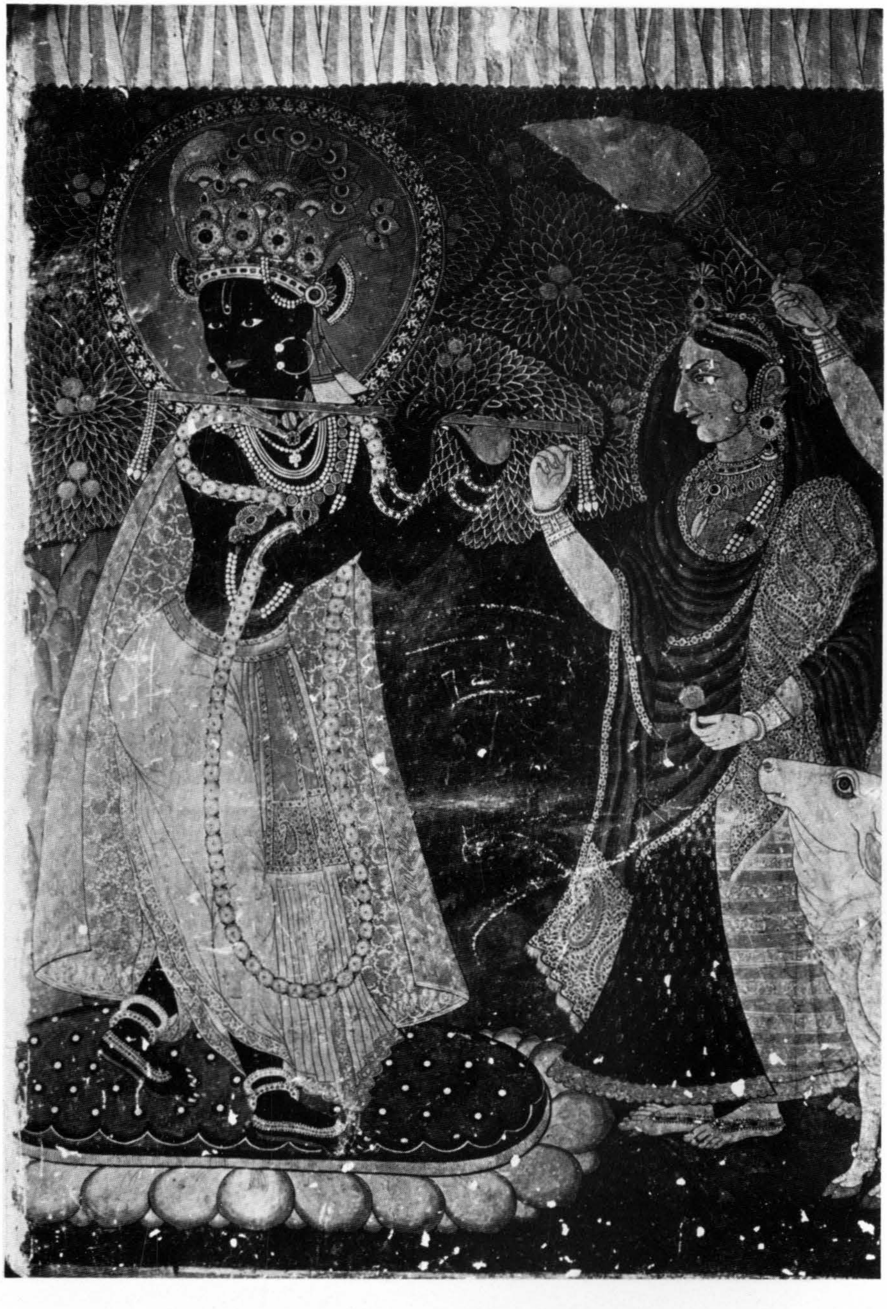
196. Section of a Scroll Depicting History of Itum baha, 18th century, Itum baha, Kathmandu.



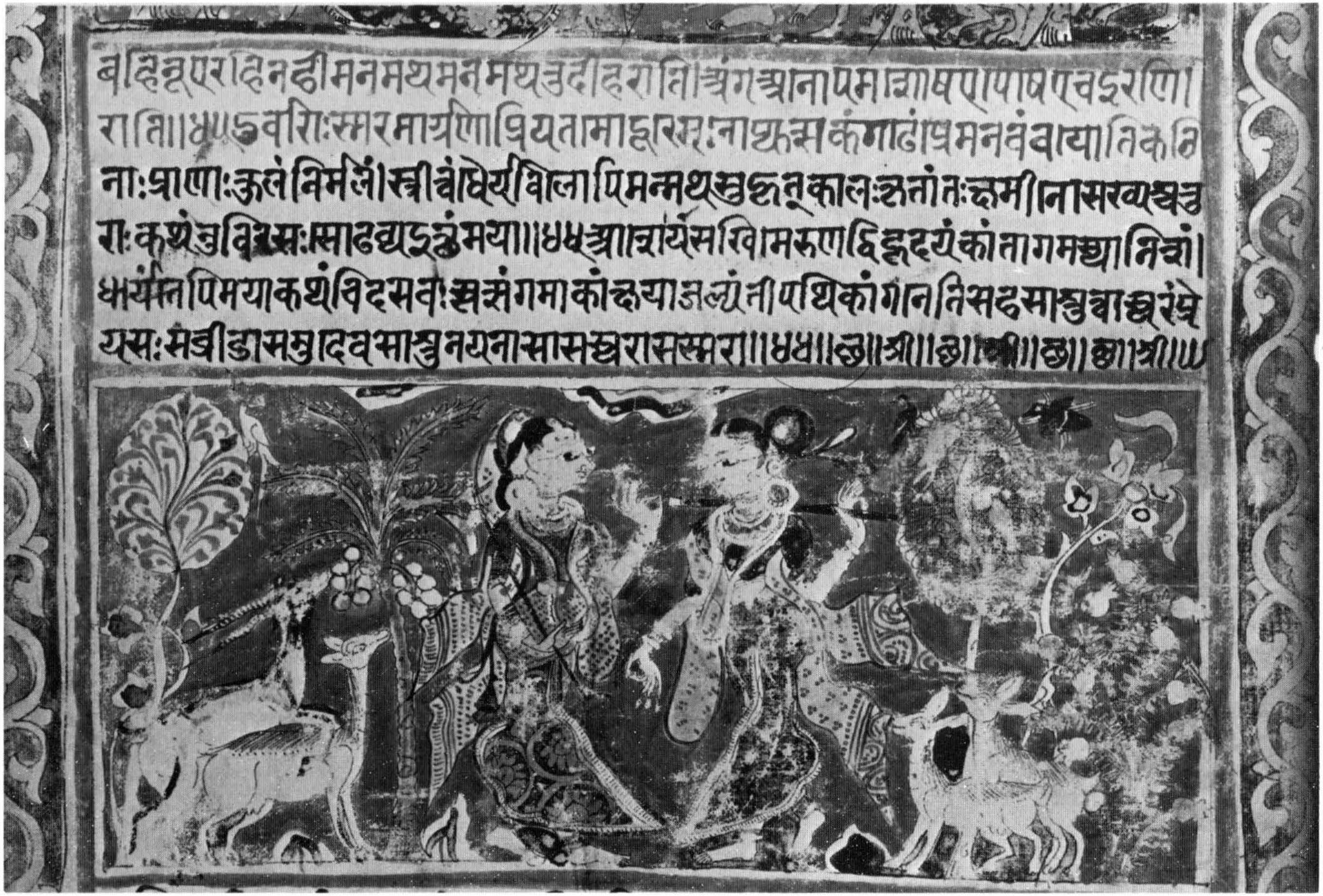
197. A Queen deified as Lakshmī (?), 19th century, Private Collection.



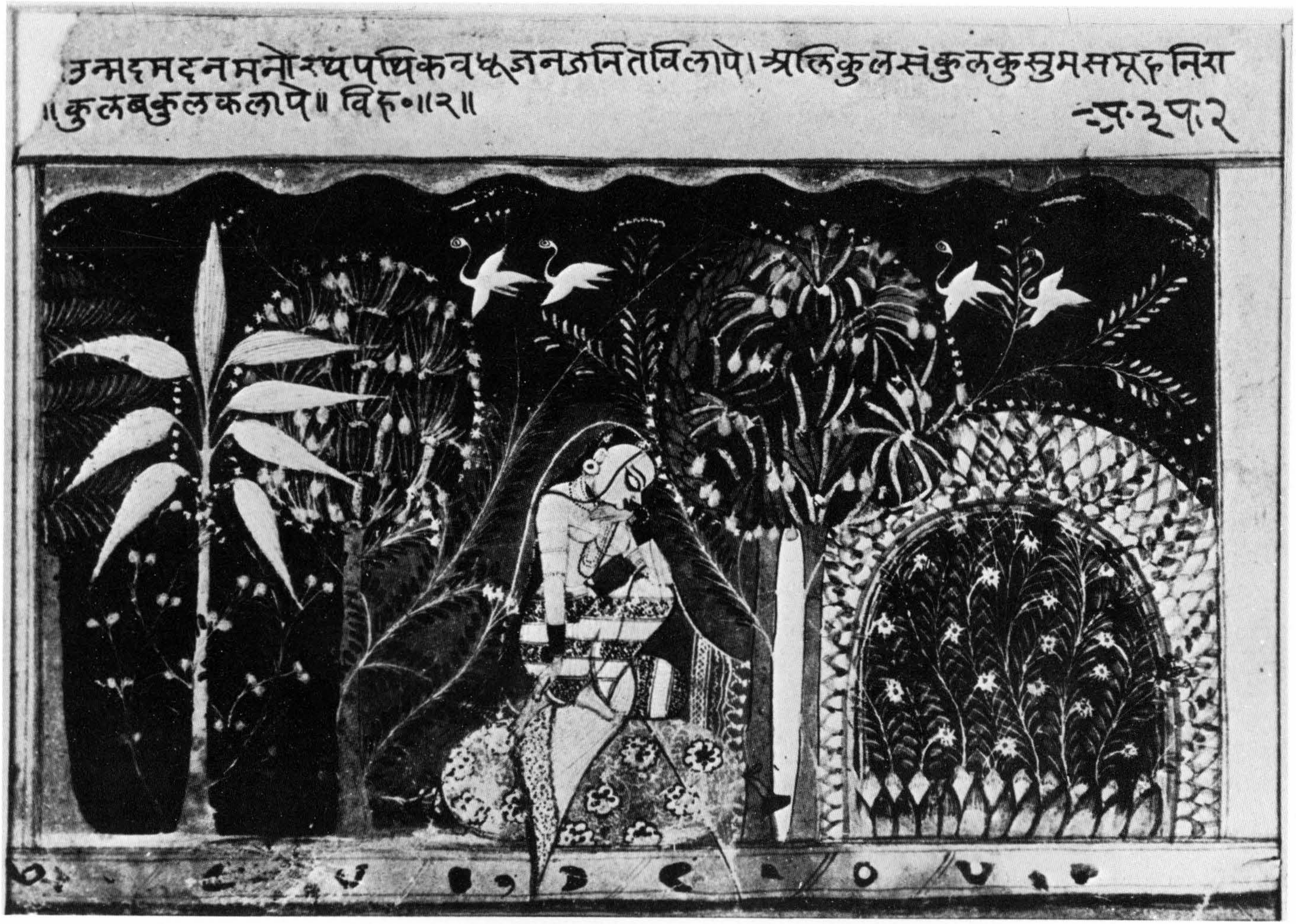
198. Apotheosized Portrait (?), 19th century, Present location unknown.



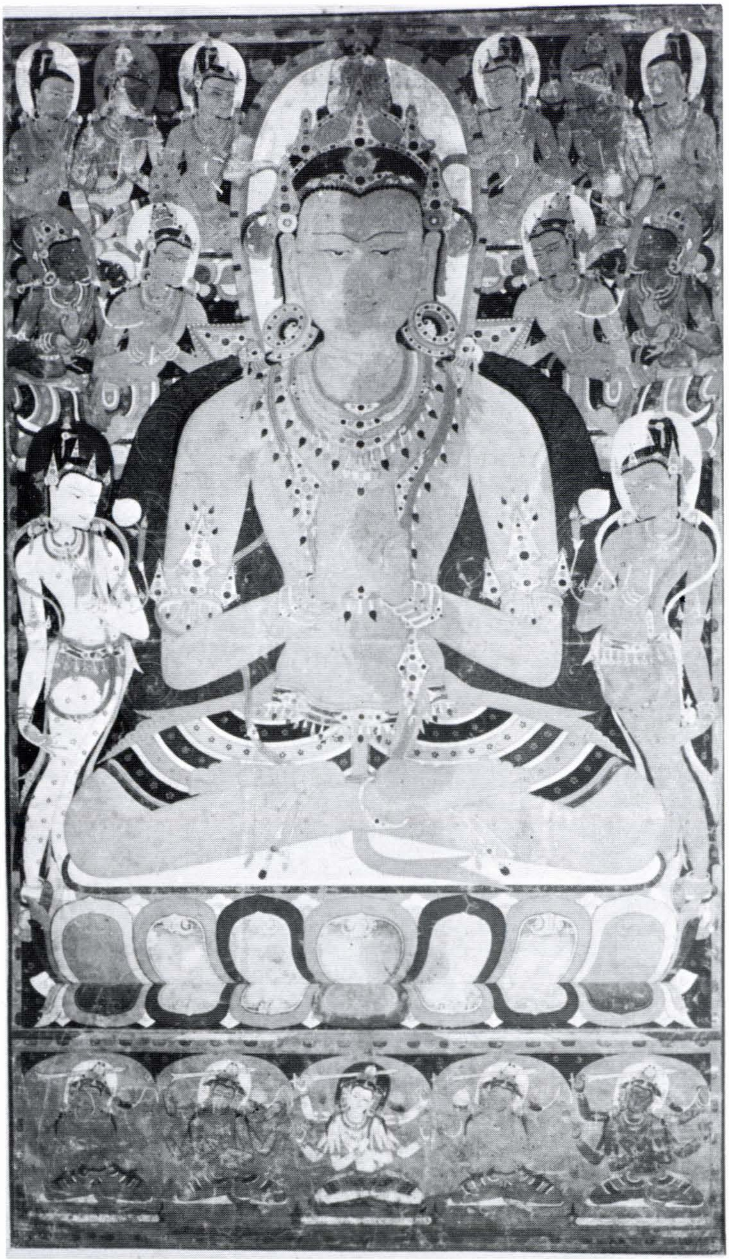
199. Kṛṣṇa and Rādhā, Mural, 19th century, Thapathali, Patan.



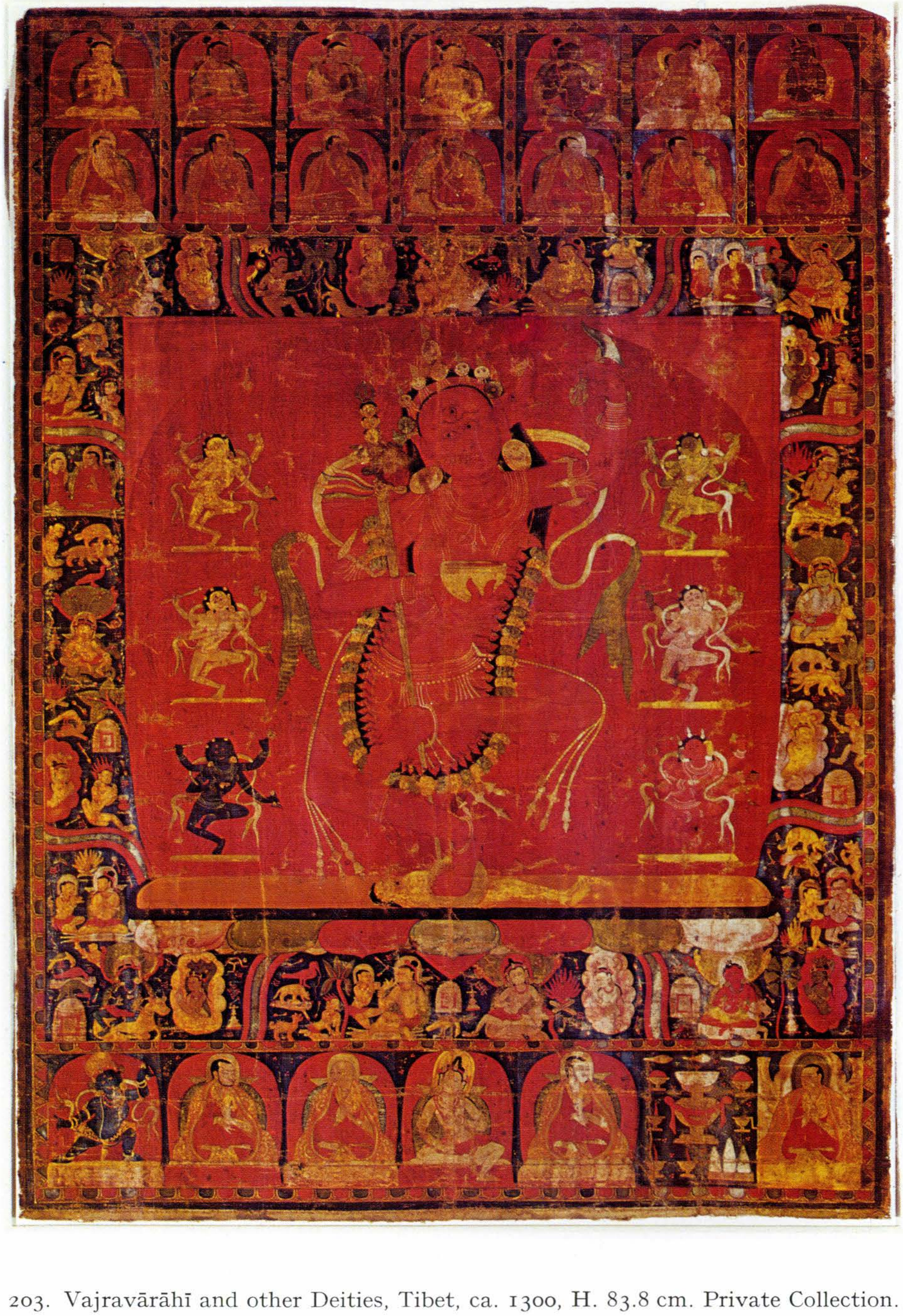
200. Illustration of a verse from the *Vasantavilāsa,* India, 1451/52, Freer Gallery of Art.


उन्मदमदनमनोरथपथिकवधूजनजनितविलापे। अलिकुलसंकुलकुसुमसमूहनिरा
॥कुलबकुलकलापे॥ विह०॥२॥
स.३ प.२

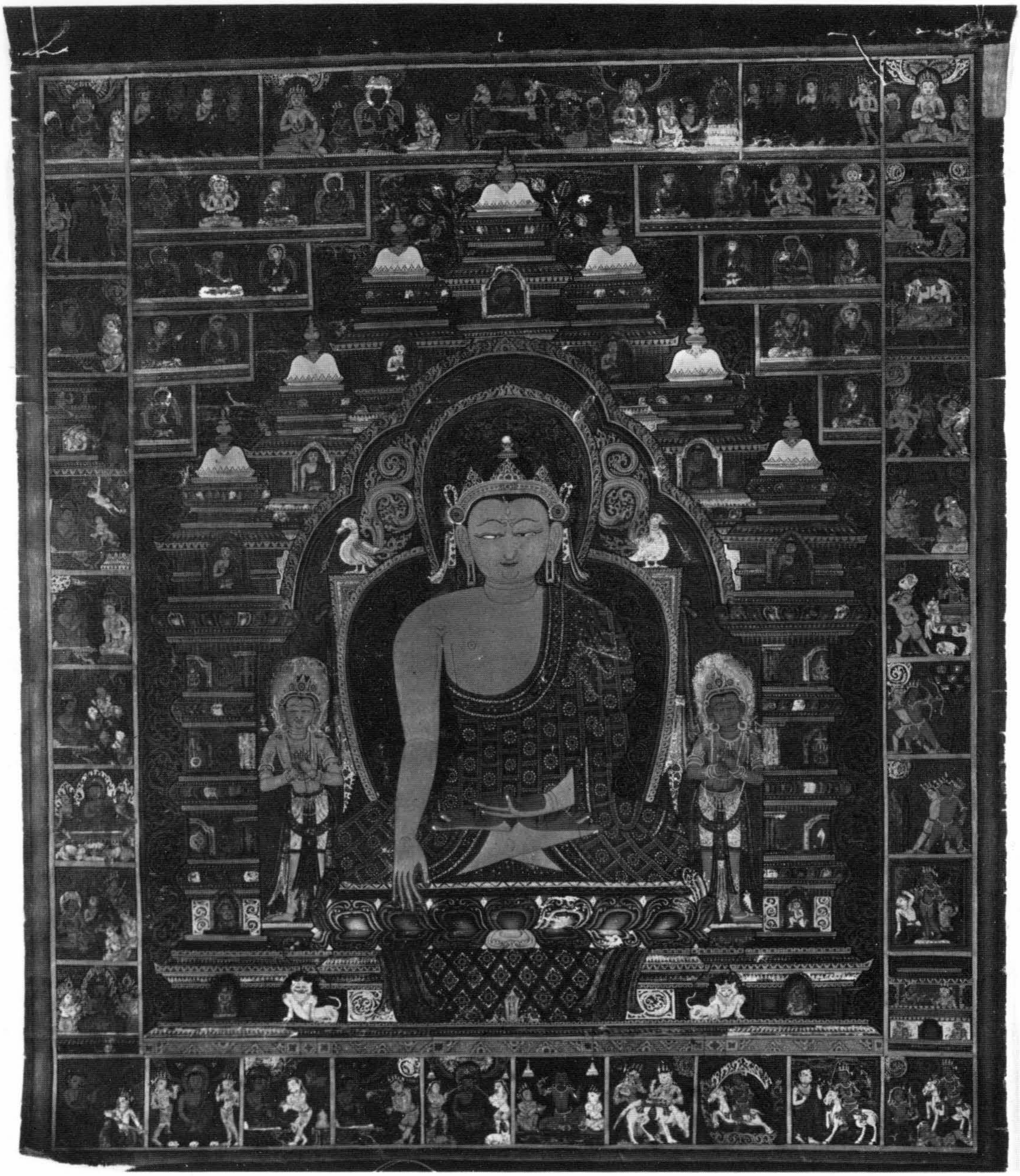
201. Illustration from a *Gītagovinda*, India, ca. 1550, H. 15.3 cm., Prince of Wales Museum.



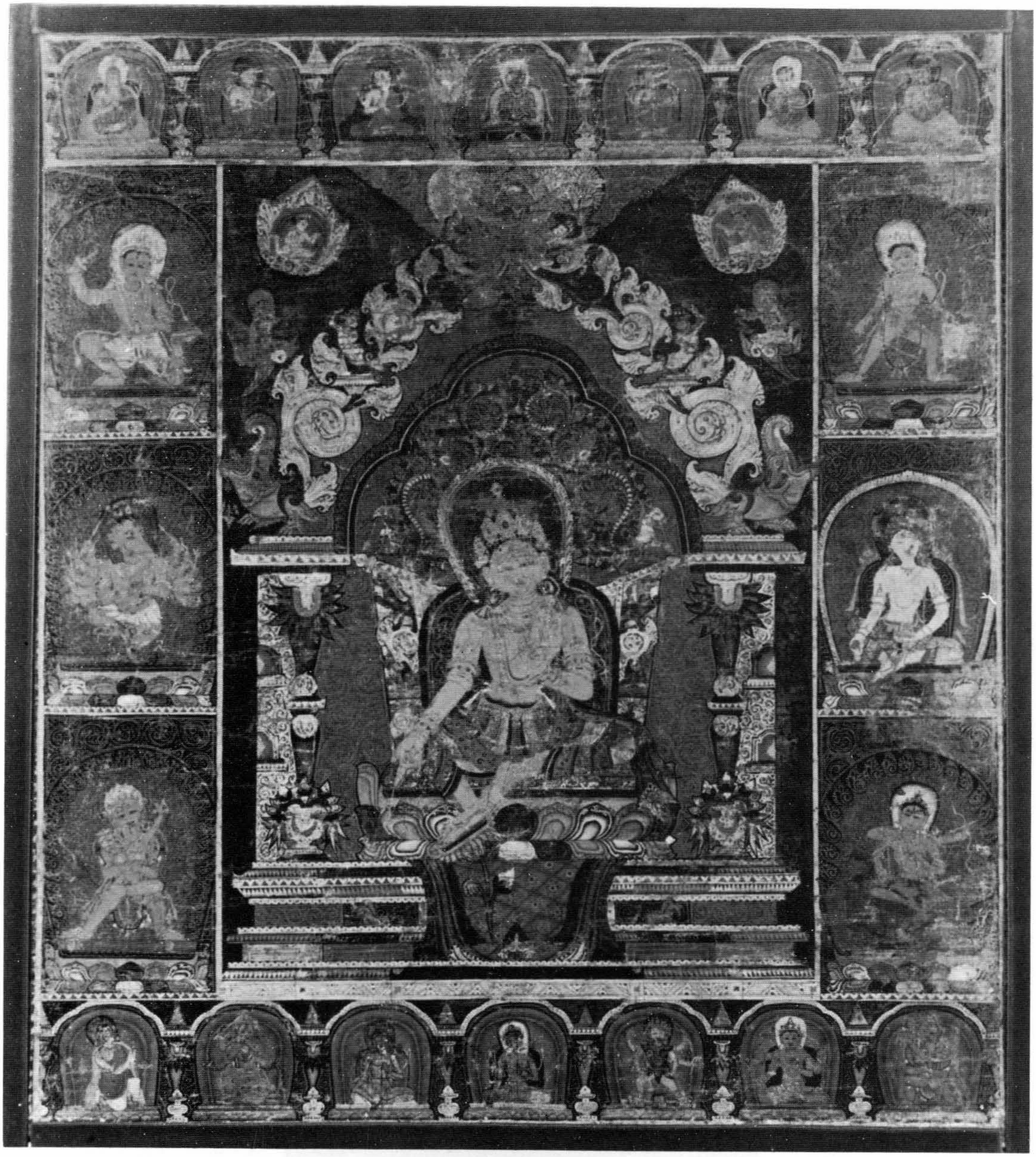
202. Vairocana and acolytes, Tibet, 13th-14th century, H. 137 cm.
Bharat Kala Bhavan.



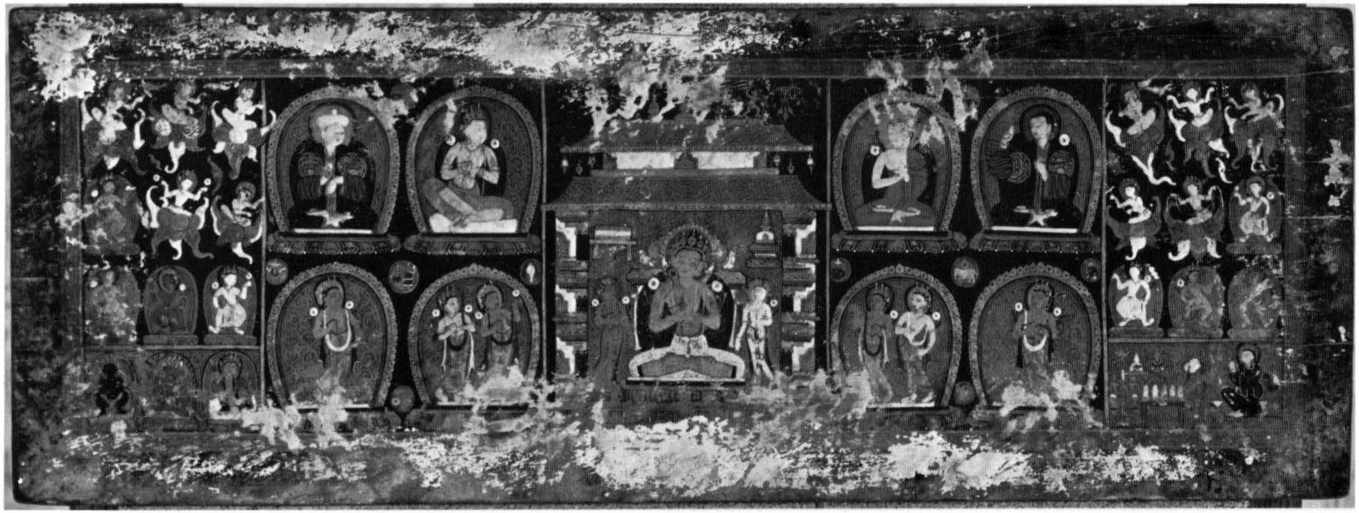
203. Vajravārāhī and other Deities, Tibet, ca. 1300, H. 83.8 cm. Private Collection.



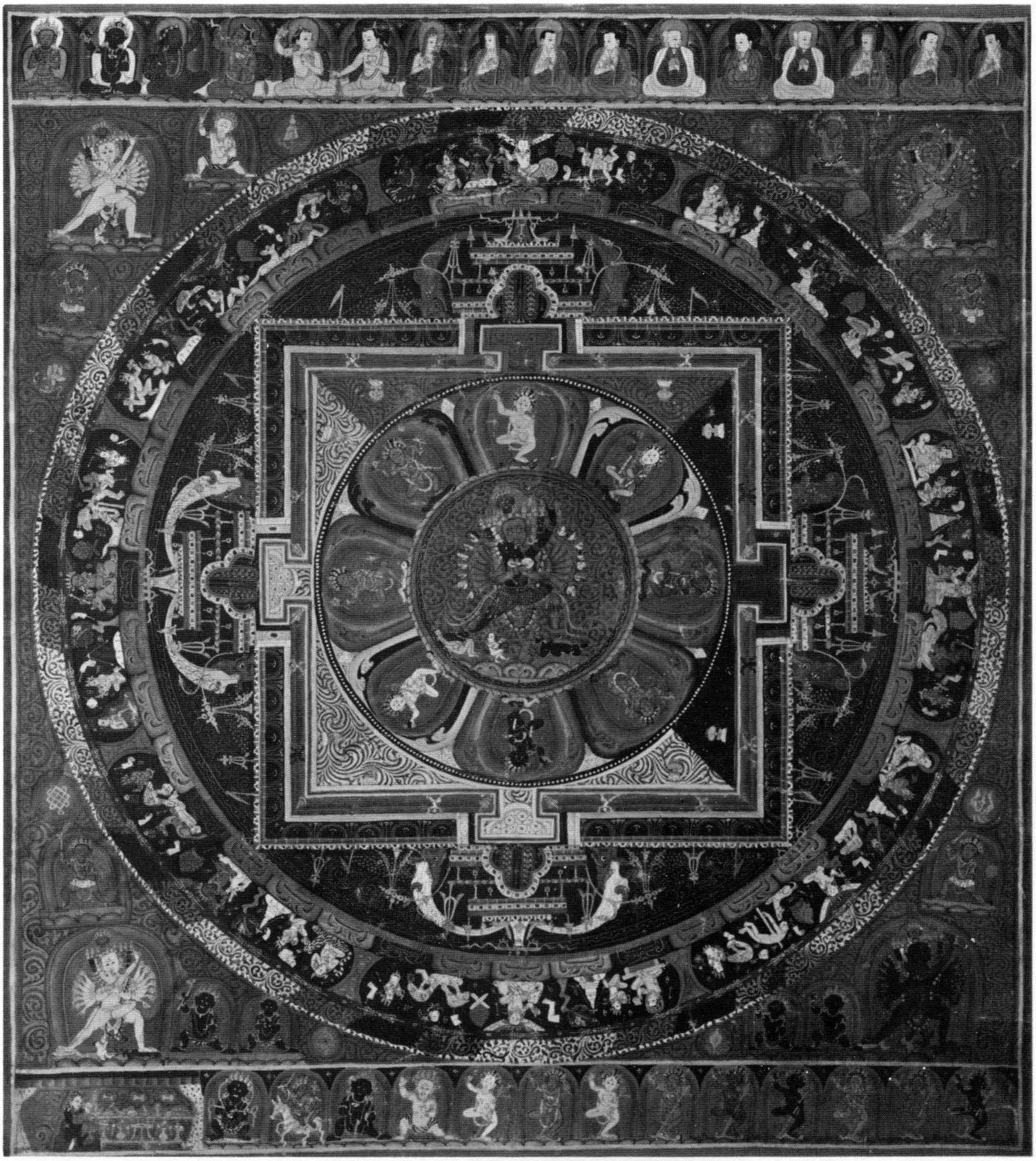
204. Life of Śākyamuni, Nepal or Tibet, 14th century, H. 52.4 cm. George P. Bickford Collection.



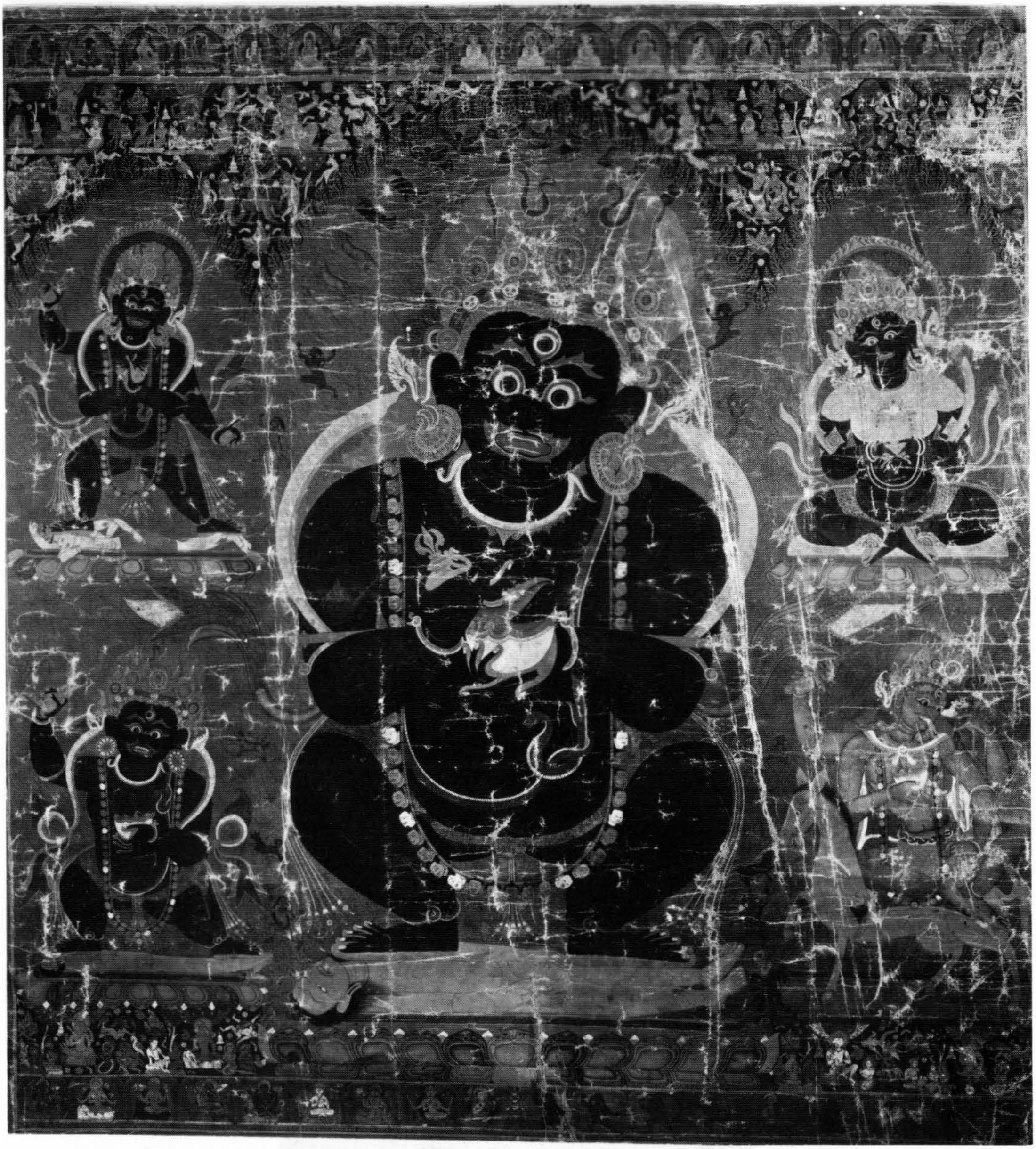
205. Goddess Tārā and other Deities, Nepal or Tibet, 15th century, H. 57.2 cm. Zimmerman Collection.



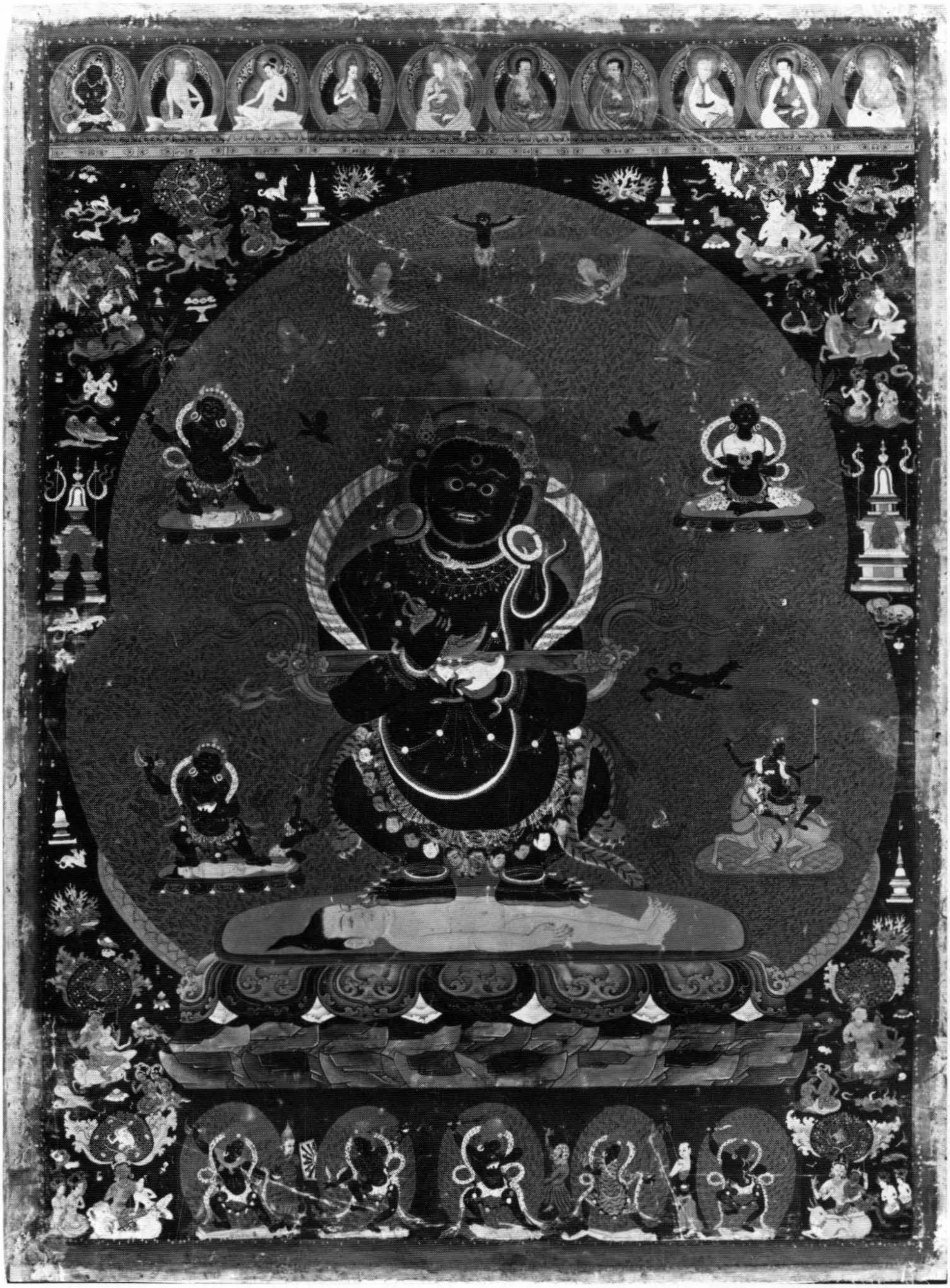
206. Manuscript Cover, Tibet, ca. 1400, H. 24.8 cm., W. 68.5 cm. From the Nasli and Alice Heeramaneck Collection, Los Angeles County Museum of Art.



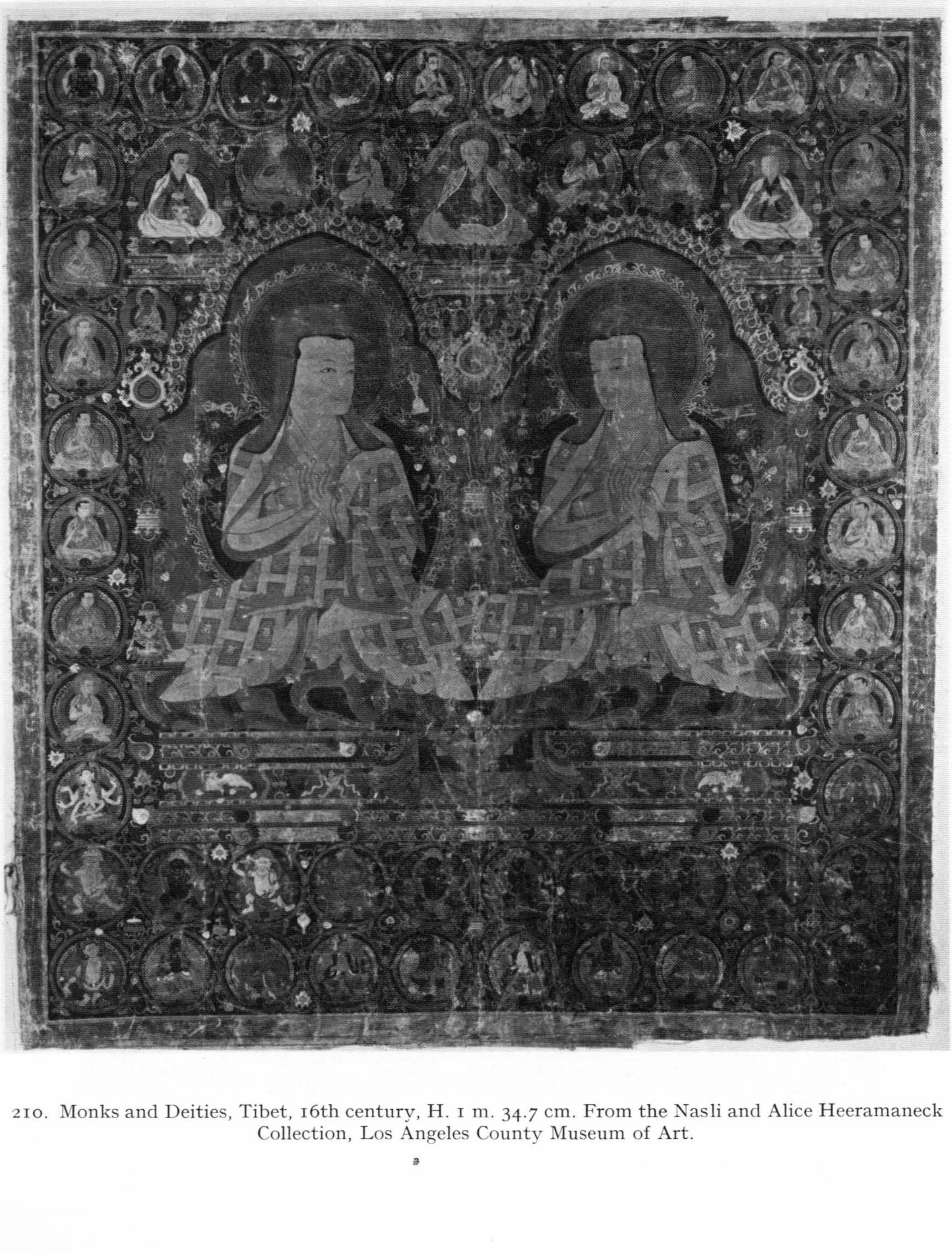
207. Hevajramandala, Tibet, 16th century, H. 55.9 cm. Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, John Goelet Collection.



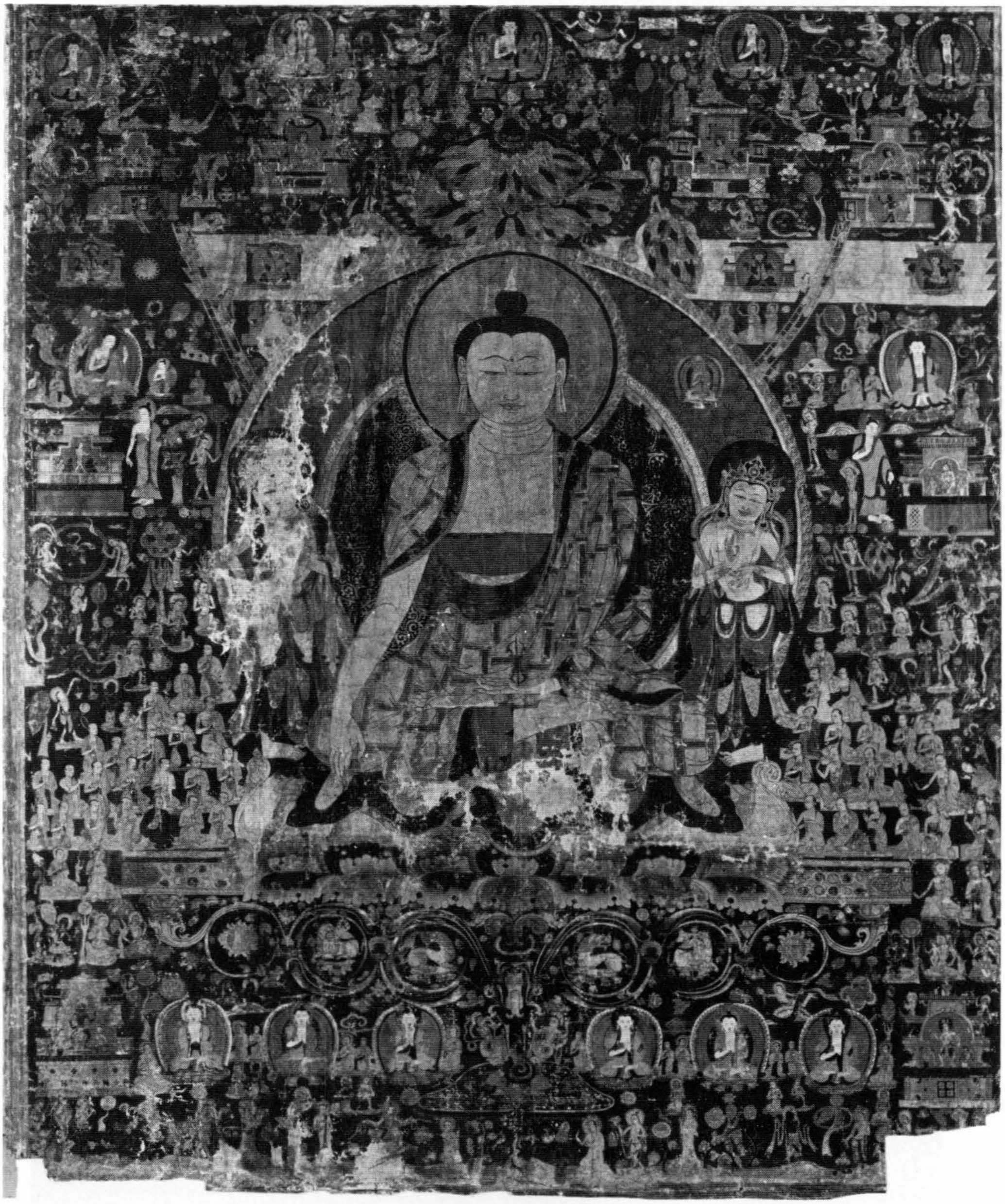
208. Mahākāla, Tibet, 15th century, H. 88.3 cm. From the Nasli and Alice Heeramaneck Collection, Los Angeles County Museum of Art.



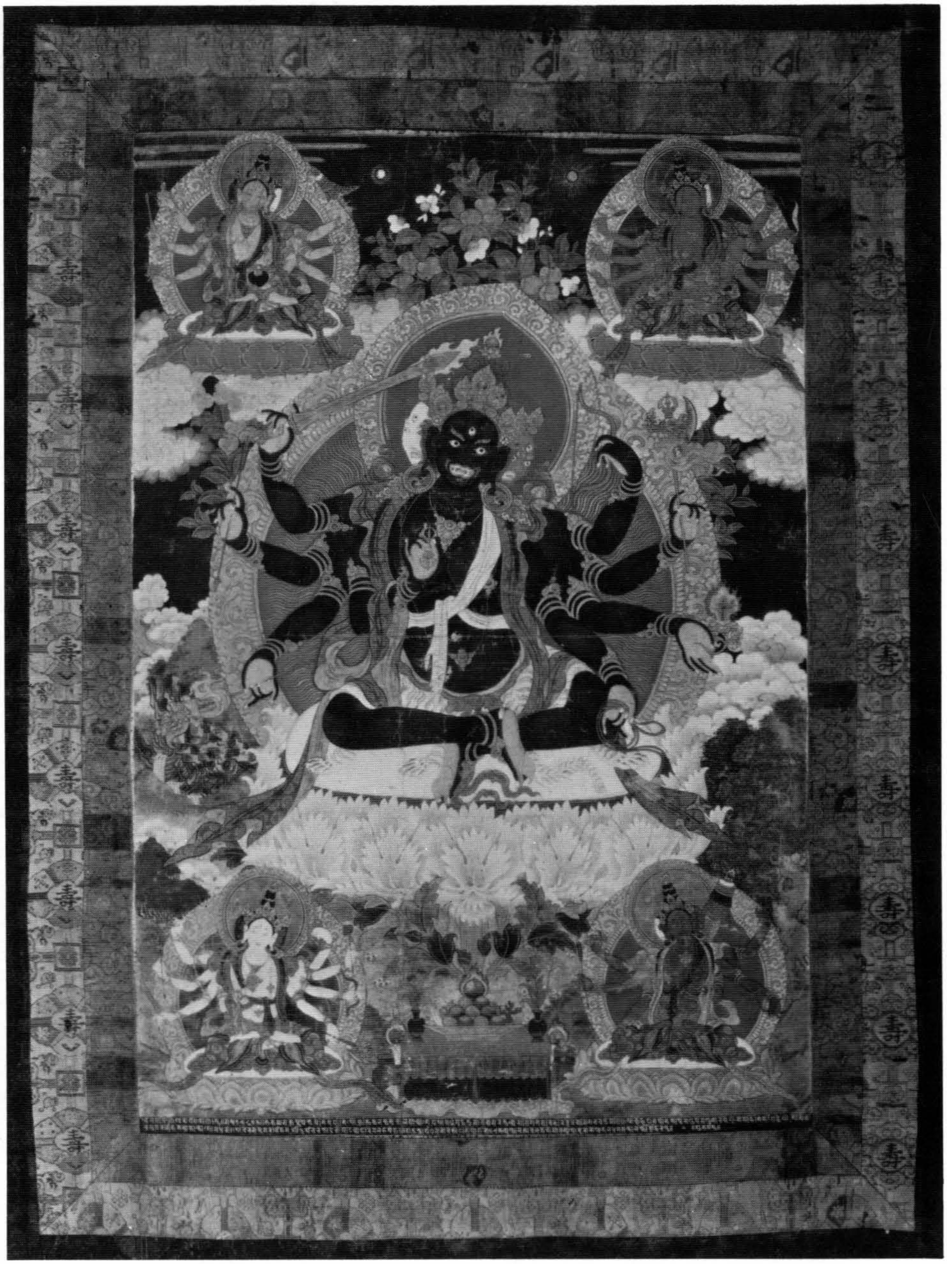
209. Mahākāla, Tibet, 15th century (?), H. 55.9 cm. Poster Collection, New York.



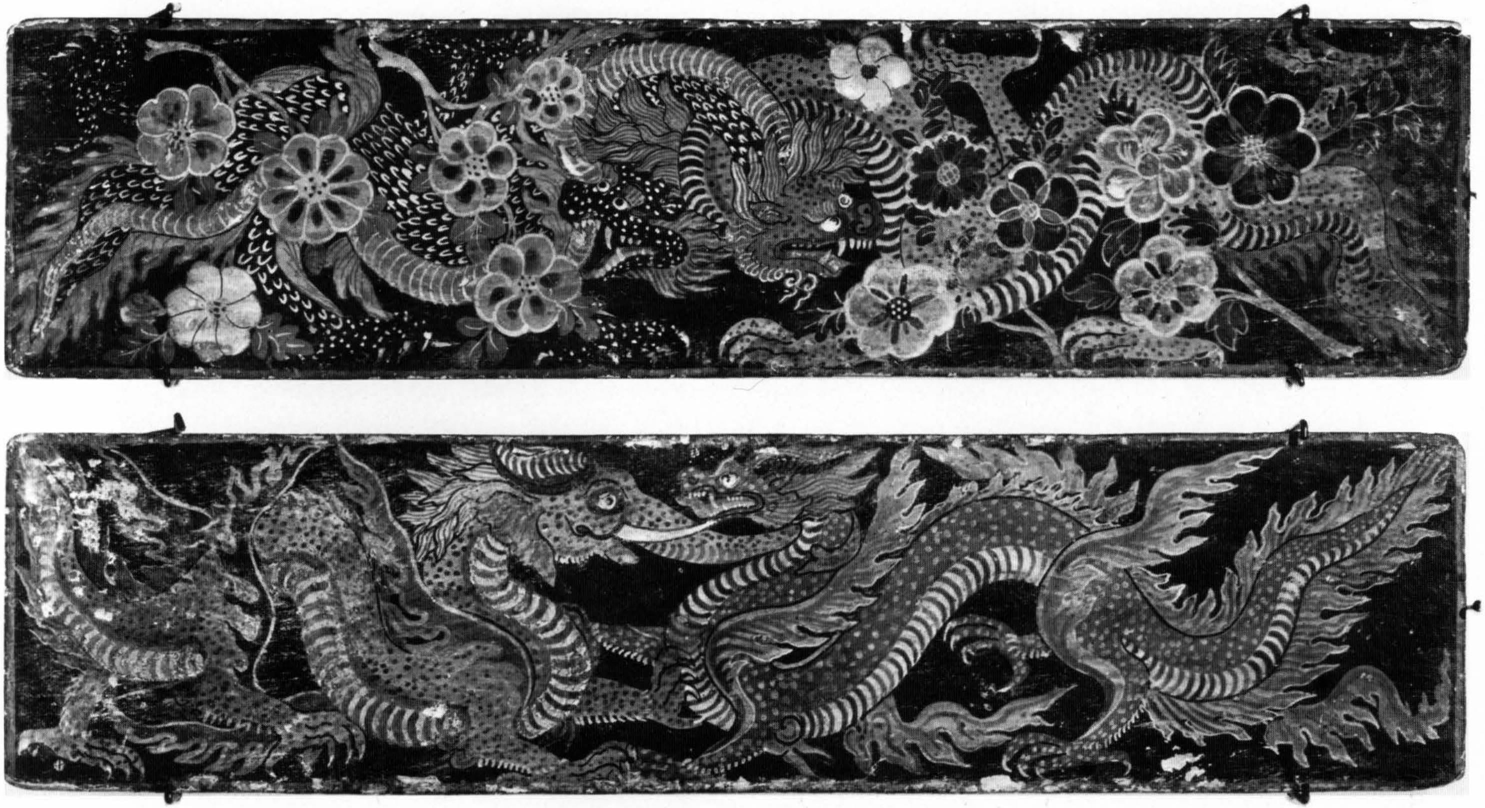
210. Monks and Deities, Tibet, 16th century, H. 1 m. 34.7 cm. From the Nasli and Alice Heeramaneck Collection, Los Angeles County Museum of Art.



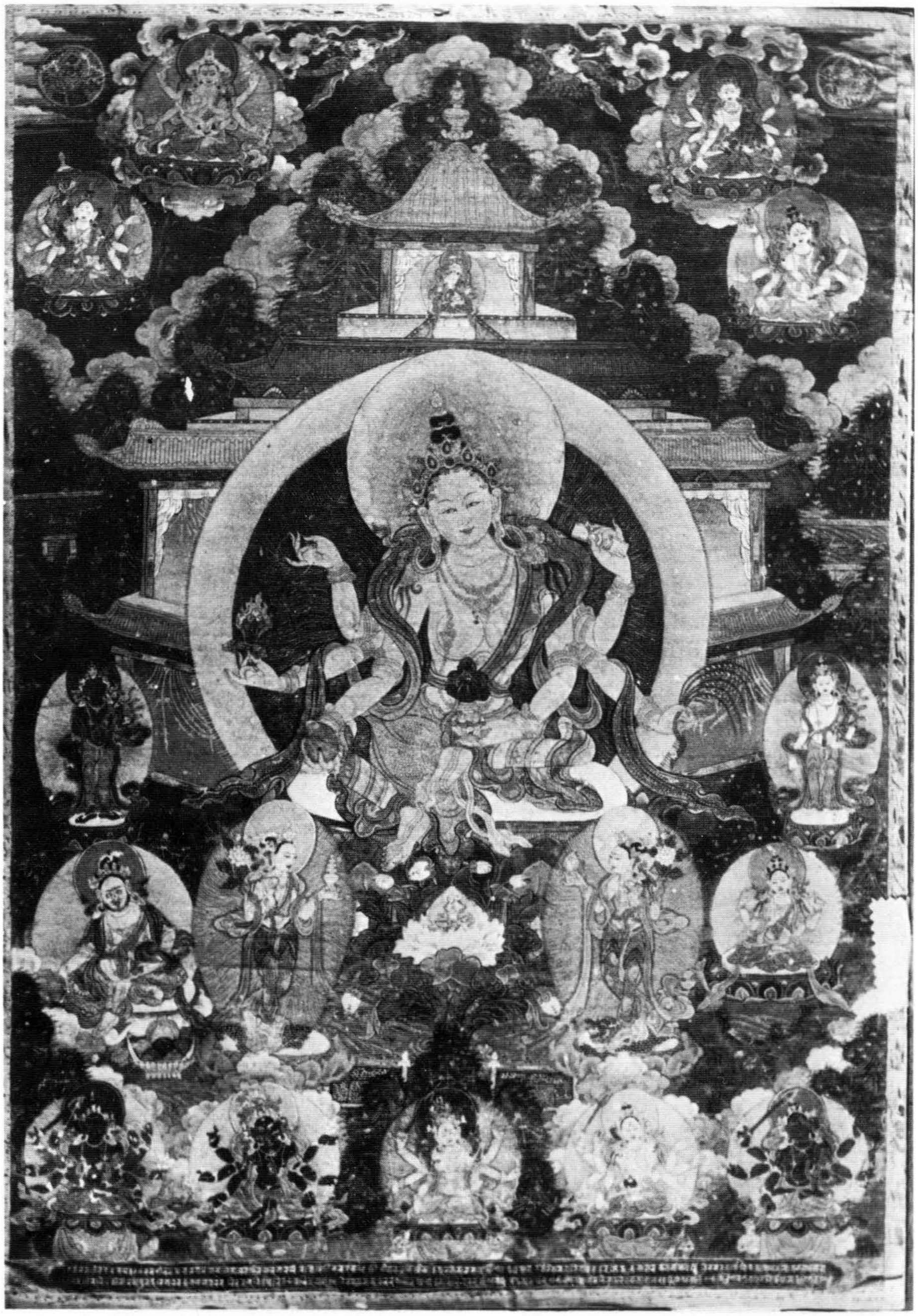
211. Paradise of Akṣobhya, Tibet, Guge School, 15th century, H. 1 m. 48.5 cm. From the Nasli and Alice Heeramaneck Collection, Los Angeles County Museum of Art.



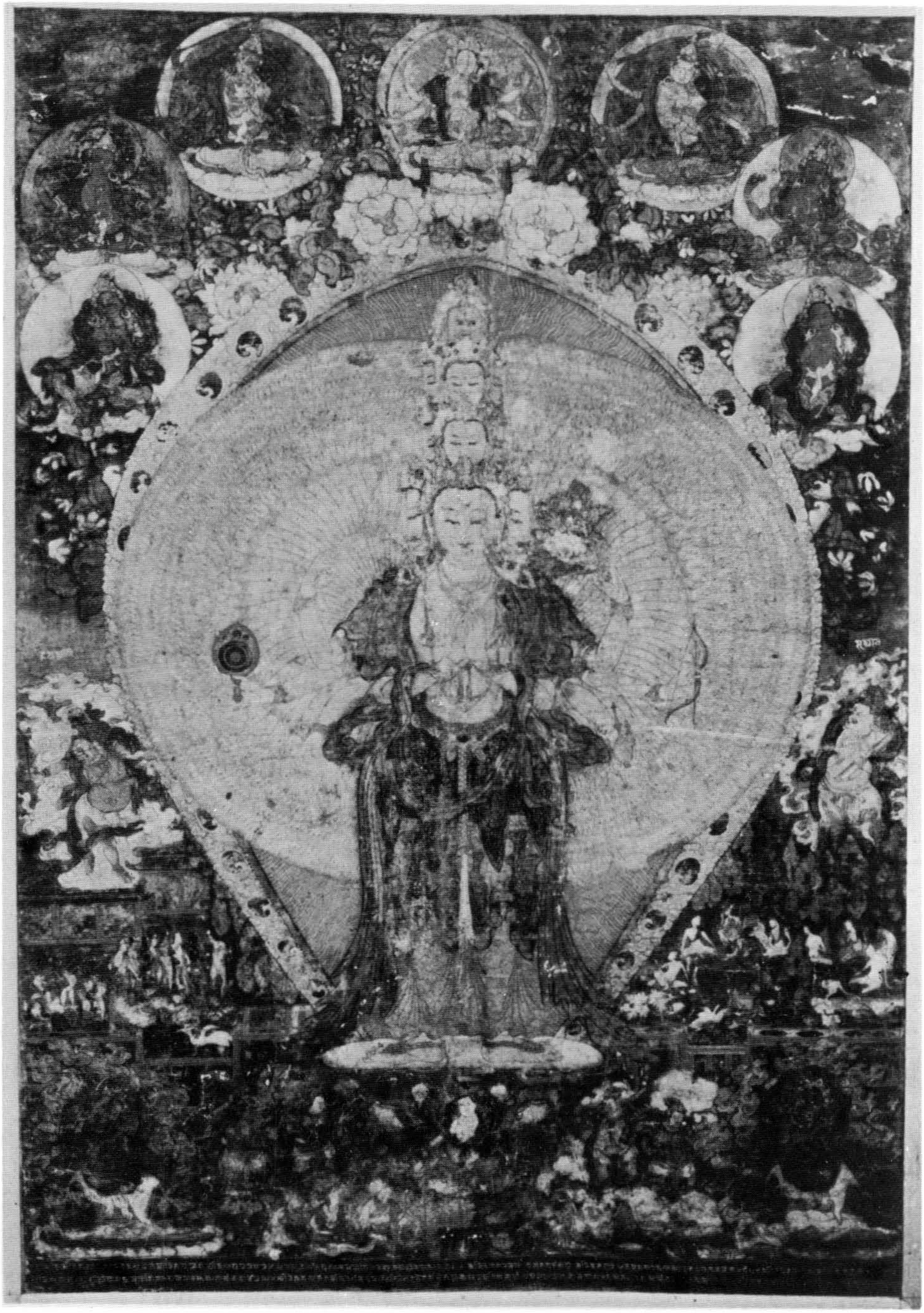
212. Pañcarakṣā Goddesses, Tibet, 1662, H. 72.4 cm. The British Museum.



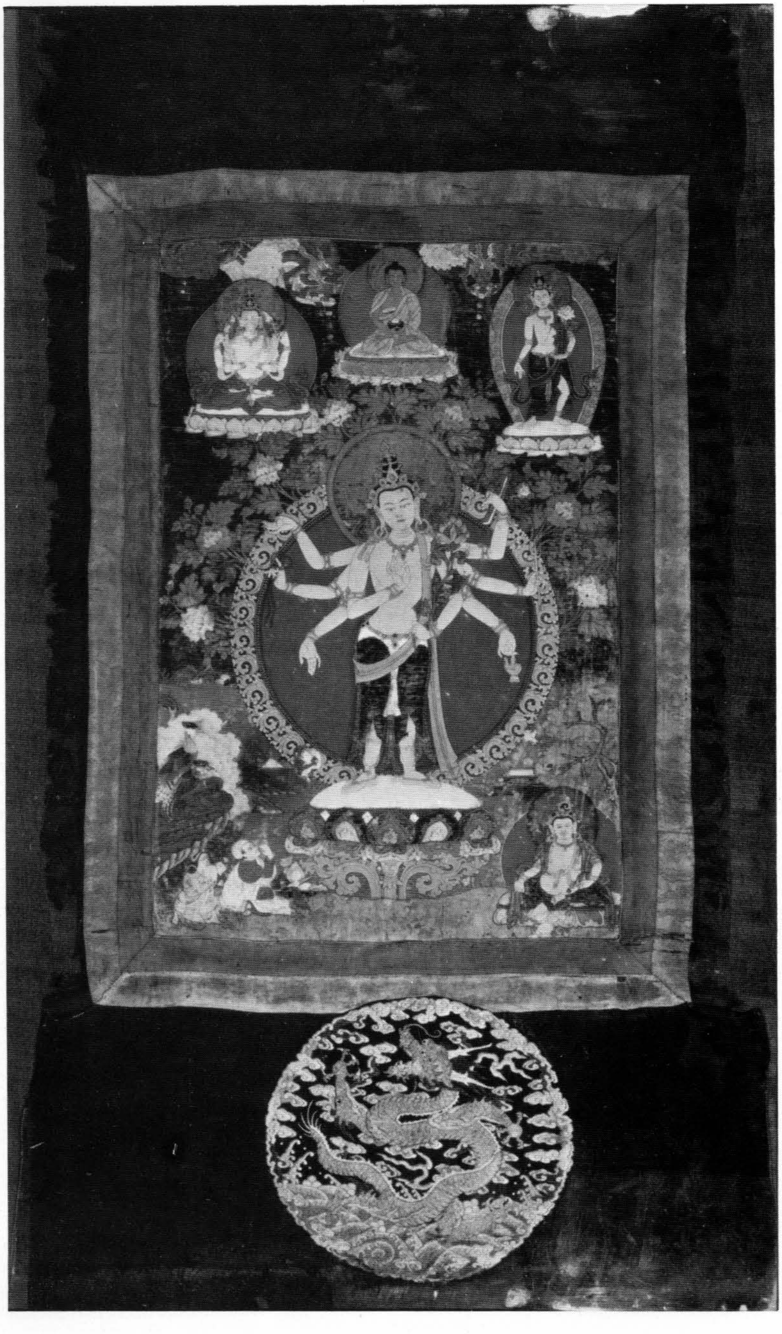
213. Covers of a manuscript, 1659, H. 8.8 cm., W. 37.5 cm. Edwin Binney 3rd Collection.



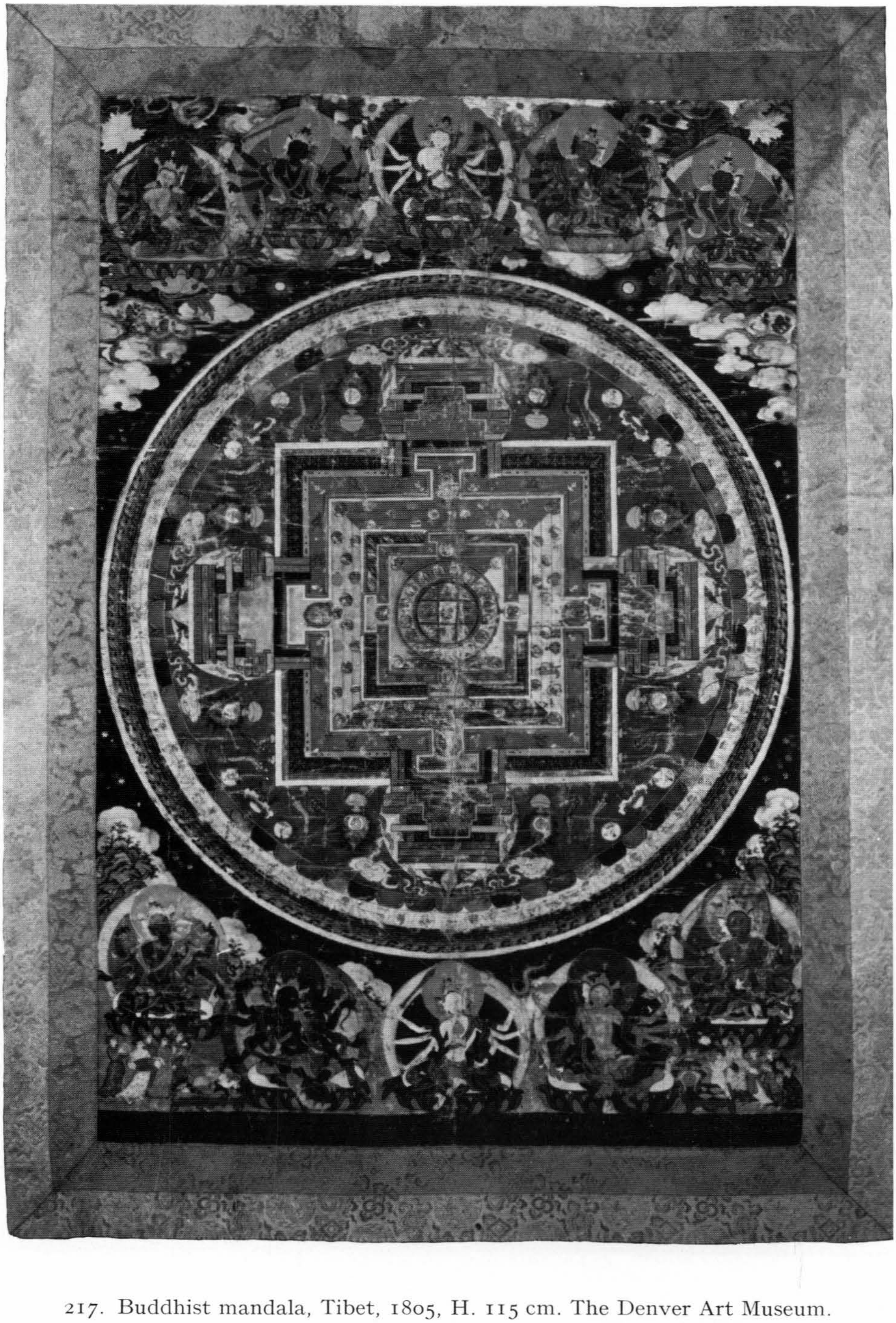
214. Vasudhārā, Tibet, 1689, H. 62.5 cm. Prince of Wales Museum.



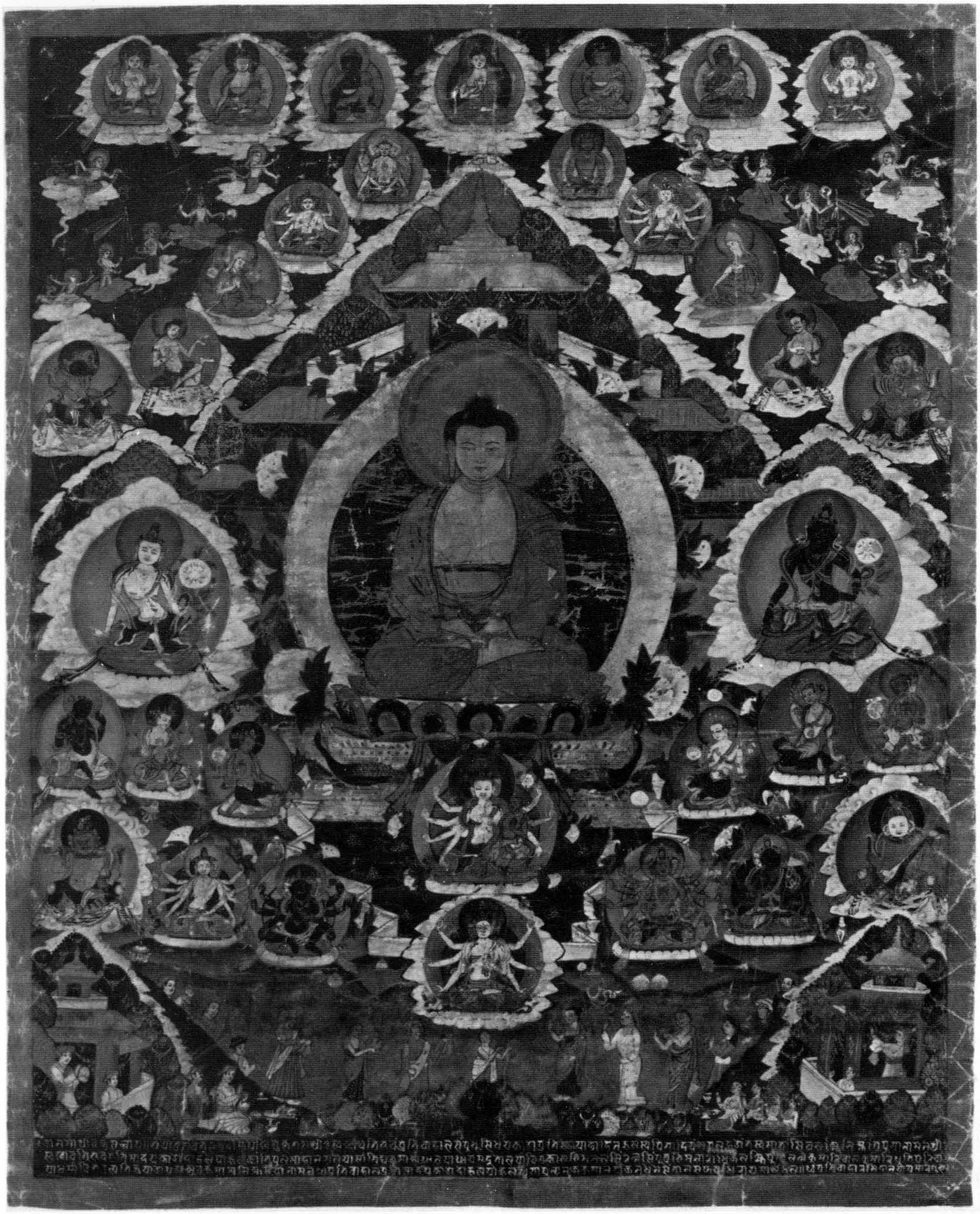
215. Thousand-armed Avalokiteśvara, Tibet, 1695, H. 98 cm. Bharat Kala Bhavan.



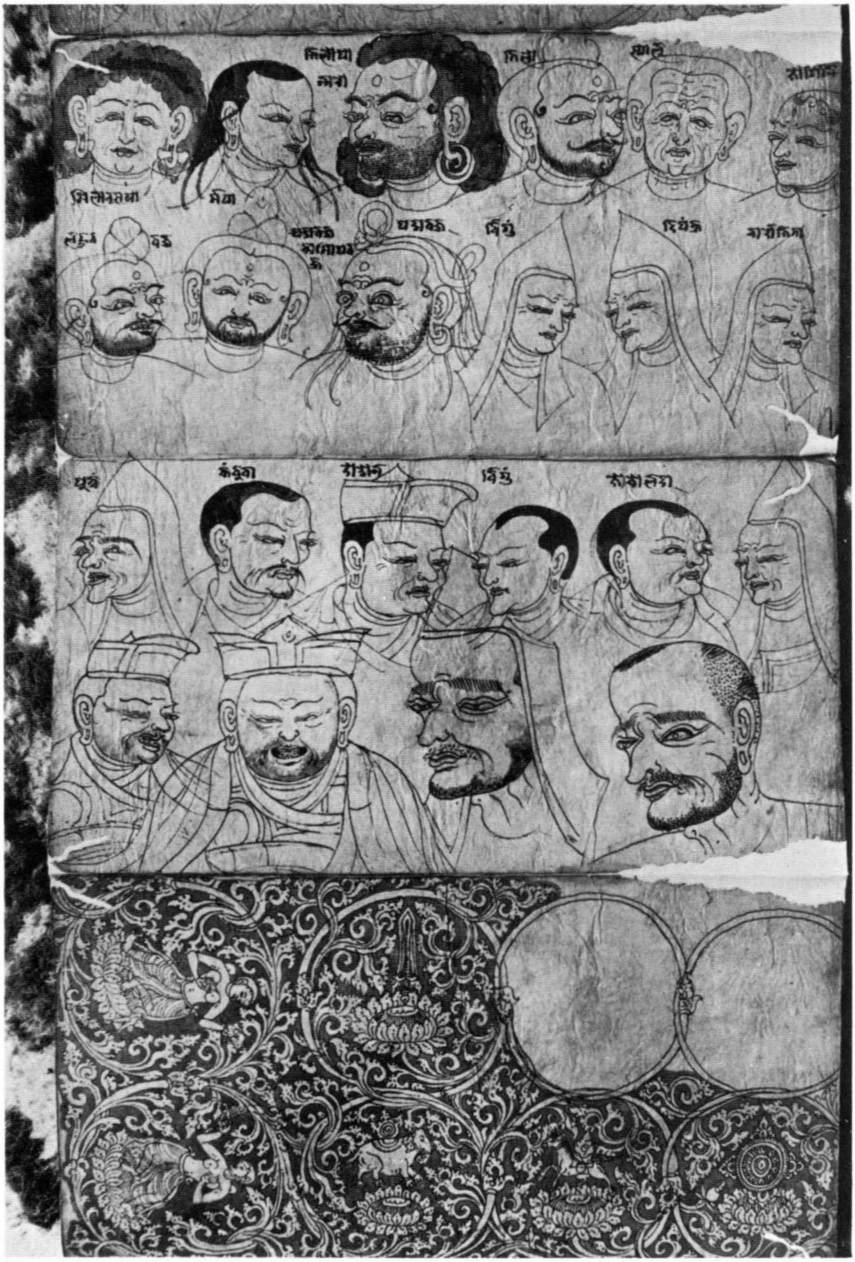
216. Amoghapāśa Lokeśvara, Tibet, 18th century, H. 87 cm. The British Museum.



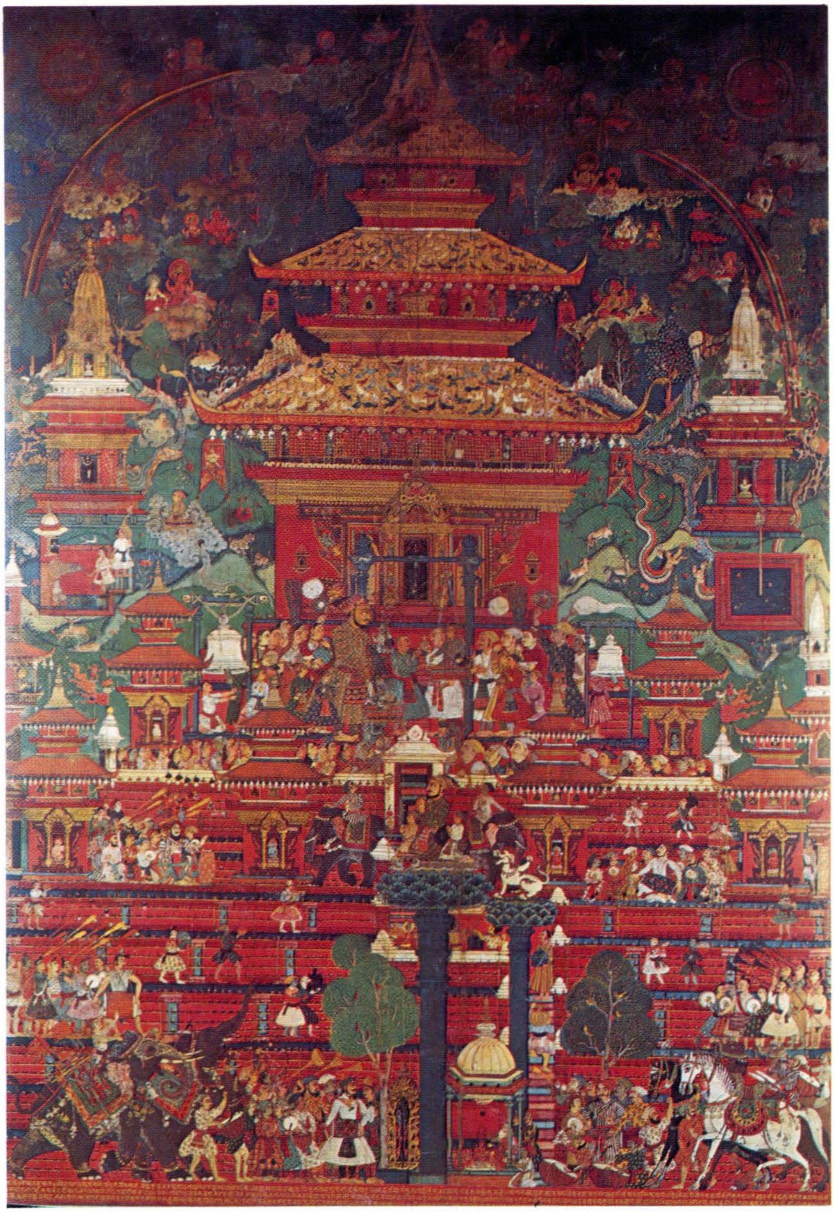
217. Buddhist mandala, Tibet, 1805, H. 115 cm. The Denver Art Museum.



218. Paradise of Amitābha, by Bhimanara Singh, 1790, H. 74.9 cm. Jim Singer Collection, Los Angeles.



219. Folios from a Sketchbook by Jivarāma, 1435, Neotia Collection.



220. Pratāpamalla performing Tulādāna ceremony, 1664, Kumar Gallery, Paris.